

YOU ARE MINE – Adoption in the Bible, in Christ, and in Mission • | Ancient Near Eastern Adoption

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MAIN VERSES

[Ephesians 1:3-5](#) • [2 Corinthians 1:20](#) • [Galatians 4:4-7](#) • [Hosea 11:1](#) • [Exodus 4:22](#) • [Isaiah 1:2](#) • [Ezekiel 16](#) • [Exodus 2:1-10](#) • [Acts 7:21](#) • [Genesis 48:1-20](#) • [Ezekiel 47](#)

A Place to Worship

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

Shabbat Shalom, everybody. Welcome to Founder in Truth Fellowship. If you are watching online for the first time today or visiting for the first time, welcome to our church here in Rock Hill. We are made up of a lot of different families with a lot of different backgrounds. And the one thing I think that unites us is orbiting the person of Yeshua and being conformed to him. So welcome to Founder in Truth Fellowship. Glad you're here.

Today is a big day for many reasons, because we're going to talk about a topic that is very dear to me. We are going to nerd out a little bit—I promise not a lot, but we're going to dive into some history. Is that okay? Just a little bit? Okay, that's great. We're going to dive into the Word, and at the end, we are going to be rehearsing an ancient Mesopotamian adoption ceremony, if you will. And one that I believe is biblical, that we're going to see. And we're going to be doing it with my newly adopted daughter, Evelyn. So very, very, very excited about that.

So let's dive in.

Adoption in Paul's Teaching

Adoption in the Bible. We'll start in the New Testament and go back because that's how Paul does it. So in the New Testament of the Bible, there is a Greek word that is used for the concept of adoption. And that word is *hierothesia*. And it's used five times in the letters of Paul as a way for him to depict God's saving grace, love, mercy, and pursuit to bring every single one of you into his family.

[Ephesians 1:3](#) through 5 is one of those examples that I think most of us are familiar with. And it says, Predestined us for adoption. And I love the cosmic tone that Paul uses in just trying to give weight to God's love and the relationship that he yearns to have with you. Before the foundation of the world, adoption was already in his forefront. Building a family and community was already at his forefront. And Paul uses this imagery here in Ephesians and in Romans and Galatians, along with other metaphors to hammer a point about God and God's character.

And that point is this: with God, it's final. And the point is, any and all promises God has made, they are yes in Christ. That's [2 Corinthians 1:20](#). Love this. Paul's making this grand declaration. He says, "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ. And so through him, the amen is spoken by us to the glory of God." All of the promises of God are yes in Christ. Everybody say amen. Amen.

Why? Because all the promises of God—the promises of redemption, the promises of peace, promises of hope, promises of restoration, of new creation, of blessing, that the darkness will be driven away and defeated, promises of strength, promises of being sheltered in her wings, promises of finding refuge, promises of no longer being in exile—they all find their conclusion in Christ, and that conclusion is yes. It is a source of our hope.

God's Saving Grace and Adoption

That's where we're going to begin, where everything Paul is driving at here. And we're going to talk a little bit about adoption in the first century, and then we're going to jump back to a time period that you could call the ancient Near East, and that is about the 5th to 14th century BC.

See, adoption in the Roman world in the first century, during the time of the apostles, disciples, and Yeshua, was pretty common. And its scope was a lot larger than what we employ today. Adoption could take place if a man or woman or couple wanted to bring a newborn son or daughter into their home, of course. But more common in the Roman world was the type of adoption that orbited around inheritance. Wealthier patrons would adopt older men or women so that their inheritance and their name would be secured in their household moving forward.

Women would be adopted and a price would be given to their family to make sure that the adopter had someone to take care of them as they got older.

You don't have any kids. What do you do? I will adopt a caretaker as my daughter. That way, it's genius, maybe. I don't know. If you were a male heir, successful, you built an establishment, a name, but you don't have any children, where does that go? The idea is that you want your name to be carried on, and this had afterlife implications in the ancient world in the first century, but also that status moving forward, your memory to be maintained.

Julius Caesar, after winning the grand civil war in 46 BC, became the one that brought peace on earth in the Roman Empire, and that's exactly what they said about him. He became the dictator over the Roman Empire in 46 BC, but this all-powerful Caesar, king, the first king dictator over Rome, he didn't have any kids. All of this power, all of this responsibility, this name—how is he going to bring security to it, the insurance policy that it will continue after he dies?

Well, he had a grandnephew named Octavian, also known as Augustus. And he mentored him, he trained him, and he adopted him. He became known as Augustus Caesar. And this became his son and sole heir to all of his estate and power and became the next Caesar after him.

The Language of Adoption and Status

Yeah. So when Paul speaks of adoption, he is not simply referring to the genuine love of God, which is a big deal, but he's using strong legal language to depict a status change that has taken place in your life through the eyes of God. You have left your old household and you have entered into a new one. Not only that, you've left your old status completely. Many times, patrons would adopt slaves as their own sons, which was a huge status change because now that slave is no longer a slave, right? He's now an heir.

Paul uses this exact language in Galatians chapter 4. Starting in verse 4, he says, "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, the Spirit who cries out, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but God's child. And since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."

Can you imagine in the Roman Empire, you yourself being of somewhat of slave status, which the majority of Judeans were, and this is the encouragement that Paul sends you. He says, "Listen, our God loved you so much that he sent his son," and this is the implication of it: your status has changed entirely.

He goes on to say that you are an heir alongside Yeshua, of Jesus. Now, Jesus is never referred to using this metaphor, adoption. He is the Son, the Son of God. It's a kingship title. He is the heir, but we are brought into the house and given the same status as the heirs, even as we are being conformed to his image. This is Paul's theology.

And despite the contemporary legal implications surrounding adoptions, Paul is also retelling the story of Israel in light of his view of everything Jesus is and everything God has done. All right, everybody good? Kind of laid that foundation? How you doing? Okay.

The Old Testament and Ancient Adoption

Now, when we turn to the Old Testament—the Hebrew Bible—we're looking at a different time and a different culture entirely than what Paul lived in in the first century. And we look for this concept of adoption in the Old Testament. It's more difficult to find.

Why? It definitely happened. It definitely happened a lot. But there was no Hebrew word for adoption anywhere in the Old Testament. Didn't exist anywhere. The word that we have now for adoption in Hebrew didn't come about until the 20th century. And they based it off the word that means strength, embracing and making stronger, which is quite poetic. Didn't exist during the time when the Bible was written. Did not exist. So we don't have this Hebrew word for adoption in the Old Testament, but we do have specific phrases, words, and idioms used to describe this concept.

How many of you guys know that Israel, the nation of Israel, during the time of the Old Testament, was not the only nation that dwelled in the world? When we read the Bible, sometimes it's like, okay, we've got the Amorites and the Hittites and the Parasites and whatever, and you've got all these guys. But sometimes we forget that they were surrounded by a lot of neighbors, a lot. And this is where we get something called the Fertile Crescent in the ancient Near East—I have a map pulled up here.

We have a lot of different nations, right? A lot of different nations. We talk about the time of the patriarchs, the story of the Exodus, the period of Israel entering into the land of Canaan. We refer to that time, this geographic location, as the ancient Near East. It's kind of a formal name. But this is the era of the Fertile Crescent. You have Egypt, the Hittites, the Assyrians. You have Greater Mesopotamia and all the kingdoms in there. The Babylonians. This was a hopping place to be in the world during this period of time.

It is from this area, from these nations, that we developed our systems of writing and reading, arithmetic, domesticating crops and cattle. All came from this area. It was thriving. And so

when Israel was redeemed from Egypt in the Exodus story, and God called Israel his firstborn son, right? Israel walked out of the wilderness into the land of Canaan, and it was as if Pfeifel had just walked into New York City.

All the younger guys, FIFO, American tale, Pinocchio. It was as if Pinocchio just came out and now has all of these influences trying to control him so much, and Geppetto's just trying to guide him, right? It was a lot.

And the reason why I bring this up is if the Bible is an ancient document written within the scope of ancient Near Eastern culture, would it make sense that they would use language and phrases and idioms that were also shared by their close neighbors, such as those in Syria or Babylon, Egypt? The answer is yes. But we have the Bible, and it's just a shame that we haven't discovered a bunch of legal texts and tablets from all of these nations that we could compare to the biblical text, right? Wouldn't that be neat if we discovered all of that? We have, and that's what I'm so excited about today.

The Code of Hammurabi

The ancient law code of Babylon is known as the Code of Hammurabi. I'm sure many of you have heard of this. It was developed by King Hammurabi. He ruled around the 18th century BC and established this law code. And some believe it is the first written law code in human history. It had about 282 paragraphs or sections with laws that dealt with business dealings, how to treat one another, fines, penalties, justice, and so on and so forth. And I think I have a picture of it. Do we? Yeah, on the left there. That's the Code of Hammurabi. It looks like a finger, right? Which finger? I don't know, but it looks like a finger.

But it's the authority, right? Looks like a finger. And then you can see cuneiform, ancient Akkadian, at the bottom right—just a close-up shot. At the top, there is a depiction of King Hammurabi on the left, speaking to Shamash, the god of justice. If you notice, Shamash has four horns that are wrapping around his head, moving up. And those things shooting off his shoulders are not pom-poms; they're fire. So this depicts fire coming off the god of justice. And he's handing him authoritative items—the ring and the staff. And he's giving that over. And so what this depicts is the God Shamash—according to the myth—giving the law of the divine to Hammurabi. And this is the law of Babylon, similar to Moses receiving the law from God, right? Just kind of neat stuff to nerd out on.

And there's a lot of similarities between the laws found in the Code of Hammurabi and in the Old Testament. Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. That phrase is listed several times in the Code

of Hammurabi. But there are also many contrasts between them. When you compare the Torah to law codes of the ancient world, you definitely see a lot more mercy and justice in the Torah.

Adoption Law in the Code of Hammurabi

But at section number 185 of the Code of Hammurabi, it deals with the legal stipulations of an adoption. I said all that to build up to this. And here is that section in Akkadian right there. And in Akkadian it goes something like this: the declaration. If after a person or a man takes an infant, a young child from the waters—this is the earliest known adoption of law we have of the ancient world.

Let's take a minute right there. Isn't that cool that we have this? It's incredible. It's neat that we are able to actually see this and read this. And so we have a few things here with the translation. If someone takes a child and raises them and places their name on them, that child shall remain with them. No one can ever legally take that child back. It's done. That child's status is secured.

And notice the language. Literally, it talks about the waters, taking the child from the water. This is meant to allude to birthing waters, amniotic fluid, if you will. So if a man takes a child still wet in the amniotic fluid—this transitional phase of being newborn—and declares this child mine and names him and rears him, then they shall be his. Pretty nice. It's a status change. Although the child was born into one household, in this instance, the child being embraced by the father signals a change of status—a transition of new birth into a new household.

Later Babylonian Adoption Practices

We also have legal texts from the time of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, also known as Nebuchadnezzar the Great. And we have an adoption text—a legal adoption text. I think we have a slide. Here's the translation of it. These are the witnesses in front of whom the lady—Something-ra—has cast her son—Something-tum (the names are taken out a little bit)—to the dog's mouth. And-nur-sa-mei has picked him up from the dog's mouth and raised him. And then it names all the witnesses.

Now here we have some really striking language later in the Babylonian Empire used to describe legal adoptions. It's used to describe a mother who has relinquished her child outside of her legal domain. We're not sure if this is symbolic, though I'm assuming it is. It's legal language, all the same. Dogs were located outside of the city. That was the domain of the beasts, right? In [Exodus 22](#), 31, it says: you're not allowed to eat animals that have been torn

apart. They are for the dogs. They are not part of your legal domain; they are outside. It's symbolism, symbolic language. It's legal language. And what we see here is: when it talks about a woman who has tossed her child to the dog's mouth, it's saying that she has relinquished her rights. And a man came along and picked the child up from outside the domain of civilization and brought the child back in to his household. But neat language, right?

Adoption in Anatolia

From Anatolia, we have two Herion tales—Hittite tales, if you will. The Eulacumish myth and the myth of Apush. The most interesting passage here is from the divine mythology of Apush. It says: "...the nurse lifted up the boy and set him on Apush's knees." Here we have an instance from northern Anatolia where the child is placed on the knees of an adopter and then a name is declared over them. It's significant. Here, once again, the child is taken from a low place and raised up with a new status. Father rejoices, names the child, and has ownership.

We have another section in the Code of Hammurabi, section 170, that speaks of a maidservant bearing a child to a father. And here it is: another law from the ancient Babylonian law code. Essentially, if a man has a wife and a maidservant, they both have children, they're equal. As long as he declares, "Those are mine, those are my children," they shall not be distinguished from those of the natural born.

Adoption in Modern and Ancient Legal Systems

When we went through Eva's adoption this past Monday, the legal language was strange because when you go to court for an adoption, it's set up kind of like a court. They have two lawyers who can question you—one acting kind of like a defense attorney, the other like a prosecutor. I mean, when I went through the adoption with Benjamin, they asked me some stressful questions. I don't know what they were trying to do, poking and prodding or whatnot. Yes, I can take care of them. I promise. Yes.

But with Evie's adoption, they asked a question, and they said: Do you have any natural-born children? And I understood the question, even though it was phrased differently. I said, yes, I have my son, Benjamin, whom we adopted seven years ago. Legally, he is a natural-born child in the court system, even though he was adopted. And the same is true in the ancient world. My children, these are mine. And I run through all of that boring history stuff because I kind of wanted you guys to get familiar with the language that's being used here. The language of waters and embracing children. The language of putting children on their knees. The language

of fathers lifting up a child and rejoicing over them, naming them. Because we're about to dive into the scriptures. And this is but a small survey of the legal texts that we have. We have hundreds of them.

Adoption Language in Scripture

But when we look at the scriptures, we begin to see certain verses that stick out, like [Hosea 11.1](#). When God is speaking, he uses this language: It's legal adoption language of God taking up Israel as his son. [Isaiah 43.1](#). Now this is what the Lord says. [Exodus 4.22](#). When God is speaking to Pharaoh, God tells Moses to say, Israel is my son, my firstborn. He's declaring Israel as having a special status and relationship. He is a father to them. [Isaiah 1, 2](#). God's frustrated with his adopted son—his natural-born son, legally speaking, right? They've rebelled against me.

The entire chapter of [Ezekiel 16](#) has a poetic and prophetic spin on adoption from start to finish. And throughout it, you can see the motif of being tossed to the dog's mouth. He starts off by addressing Jerusalem and Israel as an adoptive child that has been relinquished in the field—exposed. So an unfortunate, brutal common practice in the ancient world and in the Roman Empire. Well, abortion was illegal, but exposure was not. And if a child was unwanted in the ancient world, it was very easy to walk away. Literally, you would place the child in a field or outside the city, and all you have to do is walk away. And this was called exposure—giving the child to the dogs, relinquishing rights. And in [Ezekiel 16](#), the prophet speaks yearningly for Israel to realize their special place in God's arms.

God Found You

And he says, God found you when you were bloodied in the field as a young child. And he's referencing Egypt, right? And he picked you up and he cleaned you off and he made you his. And then there's a plot twist because a marriage takes place, which was a form of adoption that took place in the ancient world. You could adopt a bride. I don't know why I found that amusing. It's a bit cringy. But you could adopt a bride. And so an adoption takes place, this new status in a household of protection. And then a marriage takes place. And then his bride goes off to worship idols and is called a prostitute. And he's yearning for this day that his wife would return. Just a poetic, lots of adoption language there.

The Story of Moses

[Exodus 2:1](#), we have the story of Moses. Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. And when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. Why did she hide him for three months? What was going on during this time? They're in Egypt, and the Israelites are being oppressed by Pharaoh, and Pharaoh says, all of the male children need to be exposed. Kill them, toss them out, toss them in the river, relinquish legal authority over them. You're not allowed to have them, right? Right?

Verse 5: This must be one of the Hebrew children. So the woman took the baby and nursed him, his own mother actually. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. And then she named him Moses saying, I love this language, I drew him out of the water, right? So you actually have a lot of things going on here. Moses gets adopted into the household of Pharaoh. Talk about a status change, right? But you also have an instance of exposure here, child abandonment. Moses was released from his mother's legal domain into the wild, into the wilderness, crocodile-infested waters, poetically into the water. And the word there for basket is actually a word that only appears one more place back in [Genesis 8](#), and it's ark, ark, same word. And here she covered this ark that she put her child in with tar and pitch. And in the other instance back in [Genesis 8](#), of course, it was a much larger ark. Noah also coated it in tar and pitch. It's a literary connection that the authors are intentionally wanting to draw your attention to because something bigger is happening here. He's connecting it to the story of Noah going through the water. New creation is coming. A status change is coming. Something big is about to happen.

Face value of the story, Moses is abandoned, and then Pharaoh's daughter draws him out of the water, lifts him up, and ends up naming him, and he becomes her son. And Stephen, in Stephen's speech in Acts chapter 7 verse 21, actually flat out says this. When he was exposed, Moses' mom sent him away. When he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son.

These are some of the few stories in the Bible where we can look at the writings and the law codes and the stories of adoption from the ancient world. We can see the law codes and practices of neighboring countries and nations. And we can see that Israel had an understanding of that same language and same impact as well.

The Most Compelling Example

One of the most compelling examples is found in the story of Jacob. We know Father Abraham had many sons, right? The son said, Father Abraham. So were you. Abraham, Isaac. Isaac had

Jacob. And Jacob had 12 sons and a daughter. But one of them was his favorite. Anybody have a favorite child? You don't have to tell me which one it is. But does anyone have a favorite? Just a couple, yeah, maybe? Okay. We don't do that. Of course not. Jacob did. He had a favorite child whose name was Joseph. And he gave him this technicolored coat. It was really cool.

But Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers out of their jealousy. In the story, he went to Egypt as a slave. He was faithful. God raised him up, and he became the overseer of Egypt. Practically Pharaoh, second-to-only Pharaoh, pretty much controlled everything. But while in Egypt, he does what anyone would do, and he finds a nice Egyptian girl and gets married. And he has two sons, two sons, these half-Hebrew, half-Egyptian, future arch-enemies of Israel, right? And their names are Ephraim and Manasseh. And of course, he journeys back. Jacob's getting old. So Joseph comes to introduce his grandchildren, his sons, to their grandfather, Jacob. And when Jacob sees them, he's going to bless them, but he's also going to bless them as his own children, giving them both equal portions of his inheritance along with all of his other sons.

Blessed as Ephraim and Manasseh

And this starts in Genesis chapter 48. We're going to see an adoption ceremony take place, where a grandfather adopts his grandchildren so that they will have the full inheritance alongside his children. [Genesis 48](#), verse 1. You can almost see, feel the grunt. He sits up in bed. Remember, this is a movie. It's being directed. The author is putting these details in for you to have these emotions.

Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine. Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Any children born to you after them will be yours, and the territory they inherit will also be reckoned of the names of their brothers.

And when Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, Now who are they? These are the sons God has given me here, Joseph said to his father. Then Israel, Jacob said, bring them to me so that I may bless them. Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him and his father kissed them and embraced them.

We see in most of the adoptions in the legal texts of surrounding nations, when someone adopts a child, a younger child, there is a rejoicing that happens, a holding close, a kissing, a playing with joy that comes about. And here he embraces them and kisses them. Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees. So where were they? Bowed down with his face to the

ground. And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand and brought them close to him.

But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left on Manasseh even though Manasseh was the firstborn. Then he blessed Joseph and said, May the God before whom my father is, Abraham Isaac, walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has delivered me from all harm, may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly on the earth. And he blessed them that day and said, in your name will Israel pronounce this blessing. May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. Just so much there. We have a declaration of ownership, the speaking of their name and placing it on the children, blessing, rejoicing with them as he holds them on his knees. And I love verse 20 because you hear it whenever we bless the young boy, the boys here, the sons, bless them as Ephraim and Manasseh. That's where we get it. Verse 20.

I had someone upset a year or two ago. They didn't understand why I would bless the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh because they were sinners, just like everyone else in the Old Testament. I said, because that's what Jacob said too. He said that in your name will Israel pronounce this blessing for all future generations. May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.

Why? Because the blessing is that they'll be fruitful. They will be fruitful and abundant and a symbol of God's prosperity and God's blessing.

The Three-Stage Rite of Passage

For all the documents we've reviewed today, and even the allusions to adoption rights in the Bible, we see ancient adoption collectively as a three-stage rite of passage. A child, old or young, leaves his or her previous status and is cast into an in-between, a liminal space. A space that is not set. It's like a purgatory.

In the founding text we referred to earlier of the time of Nebuchadnezzar, speaking about the children being placed in the dog's mouth and rescued from the dog's mouth, on the back of the tablet there are footprints of the child. Now we found this on several tablets, but not all of them. It wasn't a standard. But someone placed their child's footprint on the tablet as a type of seal.

The Liminal Space

In the text, the space designated for the dogs or in the dog's mouth, a place outside of civilization, outside a place of belonging, security, outside of a place of stability. It is here where the orphan is stripped of any previous identity and is left without status.

In this space, the child has a clean slate, neither free nor slave, clean. And when the child is picked up from that space by a father or a mother, that is the moment the child gains a new status, determined by his place within a new household. A change of identity not only takes place, but is secured.

The Old Is Gone, The New Is Here

Status goes not from the place of origin to simply being evolved into something new. No, the old is gone and the new is here. The child is not a poor child that needs a family so they can now be an adopted child. No, no. They are a natural born member of their new family, period, period.

And if that family be royalty, the status of that child is royalty. That prince, that queen, that child is an heir.

Again, in the Nebuchadnezzar adoption text, we have that seal of a footprint of a young child that was just beginning to walk, a representation of a beginning of a new journey, stepping forward.

The Weight of Adoption

a new citizen of this new household. So when Paul dares to begin using this language of adoption in regard to you, to you being given a new status in the family of God, it does not carry the minute weight of being such a simple metaphor. It carries the reckless weight of the love of God that he has for you, a love that says yes. A love that says, I will be a father to you. A love that says, like a mother that could not forget a child on her breast that she nurses, I will never forget you. I am here. It's a love that says, I have called you by your name and you are mine. And so don't take that for granted the next time that you see this language used in the Bible. The next time you're reading through Paul's letters and he speaks about this adoption and being heirs, it's kind of a big deal.

God's Eschatological Plan

And it's a demonstration of what God has had planned all along. At the end of Ezekiel, in [Ezekiel 47](#), there is an eschatological plan of adoption that takes place where God says, you know what? This new temple is going to be built and the life-giving waters are going to flood the earth and drown everything with life. Amazing vision. At the end he says, all of Israel will have their inheritance. All the 12 tribes will have their inheritance. But you know who else is going to have a piece of the inheritance of land that is only supposed to be given to the natural born descendants of Abraham? All of the Gentiles, all of the foreigners, all of those with no status, all of those who are outside the borders who have attached themselves to this kingdom of Israel. All of them will be as if they were natural born of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And if they are in the dwelling place of the land of Ephraim or Manasseh or Simeon, they will be entitled to land their inheritance there. This is the future plan of God. So maybe Paul isn't just grabbing this out of thin air. Maybe Paul understands the adoption motif throughout the scriptures and the promises of God that are always going to conclude with, yes, you are mine.

An Ancient Ceremony

And so with that being said, with this message I wanted to conclude with a small ceremony, a ceremony that I participated in seven years ago with my son, Benjamin, and that today I would like to enact again with my daughter, Evelyn, and also enact an ancient adoption ceremony as we read with the ancient law codes. And so I would like to invite my mother and father-in-law up to join us if they would like to come. And my own mother as well. I believe Pete is coming—he's working on it. So I'm going to take this special chair and put it up front. And we are going to take what we've read in Scripture today and what we've read from the ancient world, and we're going to put it into practice in a ceremony that's worth the wait.

I'm going to read the full law code that we have here as Pete brings in the water. And this is section 185 of the Code of Hammurabi. And it states this: One that is taken from the water and raised will never be reclaimed by anyone. This is your anamartuti, adoption of daughtership.

The Adoption Rite

So, Evie, you ready to step in your bucket? Yeah, let's do it. We're going to step in. Is it cold? Come here, buddy. Come here, it's warm. Evie, you are at a place where you are clean, a clean slate. In the waters of rebirth and recreation into our family. And I take you and I raise you on my knee and I rejoice in who you are as a part of our family and my daughter.

And I name you Evelyn Rae Elise Vander Els. You are the daughter of Matthew Vander Els, the son of Wally and Karen Vander Els, and you are the daughter of Jennifer Vander Els, the daughter of Mark and Jacqueline Green. And you are mine. Welcome to the family.

A Village Gathered

So thank you, everybody, for being a part of that with us. 1,406 days she has been in our household with us, and now forever. So, guys, hallelujah for sure! We're going to have an Oneg potluck style food celebration. Please join us after services.

I just want to acknowledge all of the people that have been with us from the very beginning. The Freemans, the Wilsons, the Mayhorns, the McCarns, the Coens, the Gonzaleses. Am I forgetting anybody? And Karen and Matt's family and Marsha. We have truly made this a village. And for those who aren't on our care community, I mean, every single person in this entire building and those watching online, we have friends all over the country who have been praying with us and for us daily. Gosh, Tyler! Thank you, Tyler. So we would not be here without the support and love from every single one of you. Our amazing babysitters, Riley and Abby, we bless you. We love you for giving us the breaks that we needed. But we just want to acknowledge those people that have walked with us, held us up, prayed for us—the Bushes! I knew I was forgetting somebody. They have truly walked with us and held us up and been the village to help us raise our daughter and all of our children. So we bless you. We thank you so much.

Closing in Worship

Guys, we conclude services every single week the same way we enter into them, and that is through praise, worship, time of meditation. So I ask you to stand as the worship team is going to come and lead us in worship. And thank you.

Alvino Malcano, our father, our king, father, we thank you for this opportunity to come together as a community, your community and your family, to dive into your word today and to gain an understanding of the weight of what your plan has been all along, to build your family. We thank you that we are a part of that. We thank you for your son, Yeshua, and we thank you for your grace. In Yeshua's name we pray, amen.

Let's close out as we sing the Shema.

Adonai Elohein Adonai Baruch Shem Kevotot Amen

Shabbat Shalom, everyone. And we hope that this has made the Bible more beautiful and more powerful in its impact in your life.

Founded in Truth Fellowship exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message has blessed you, or if you see God working in and through this ministry, we invite you to prayerfully consider partnering with us so that the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach all nations.

If you would like to take part in this mission, then you can do so at foundedintruth.com/give, or you can scan the QR code on the screen. These offerings go toward providing resources for both our local fellowship as well as our online ministry, but also our many outreach ministries, including our foster care and adoption ministry, local charity outreach ministry, our international online children's ministry, and any future ministries that the Lord would allow us to walk through and walk in, impacting the world around us with His love and grace and the bold proclamation of the gospel of King Yeshua. We thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at:

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