

Journey Plans

All journeys are planned with the destination in view.

Daily journeys (to work, to the shops, to home group, to the gym, to the sports field, and so on); vacation journeys; career journeys; spiritual journeys; in fact, every type of journey you can think of – all are planned with the destination in view. That means we must know where we are going, why we are going there, and how we will get to our destination.

More simply, that means that whatever destination we have in mind and for whatever reason we are going there, our plans need to include: The means by which we will travel, the route we will take, the things we will need along the way, who will go, the manner in which we will handle any potential detours or unexpected incidents along the way, and who we may need assistance from along the way.

Why? Because, quite simply, if we don't know where and why we're going and don't have good travel plans we may never make it to our desired destination. In life, especially as a believer, we can't afford to just waft around aimlessly hoping we'll get "somewhere" "someday" and be "ok."

Also, bear in mind that often our journeys have a series of sub-destinations along the way to our final destination. All of these need sub-plans that fit into the overall master plan.

Example from One of Our Trips

On a light note I want to briefly talk about a 28,000km trip Judith and I went on last year covering the top end and central parts of Australia. Our intention or reason for the trip was to visit some of the iconic places in the Australian outback and beyond. A lot of planning and preparation took place before the trip, with some adjustments along the way.

From this example we can see some spiritual parallels.



There will be occasional unforeseen problems along the way, so be prepared and have the right backup spares and tools.



You better know how to diagnose problems and have the right tools and expertise to get the job done, or the journey may come to an abrupt end.



The apparently easy way may not always be the safest or best way to go



That's for sure, this way was very deep!



You may need to adjust your plans and look for a safer route. It may not be the easiest! But at least you can get to your destiny!



That's right, I said it may not be easy! So be prepared for the challenge!



Although the way may be tough and unclear you may need to trust your instincts. Have faith, we'll get there!



Your plans must include a bit of wisdom!



Plan to have plenty of water and fuel for the lonely dry times



Check before moving further, you may get bogged and never get out!



It's a long way from anywhere and there's no one out there to help. So be sure you have a sat-phone and epirob for just in case!



Be certain to have the right safety equipment, you just may need it!



Be sure the vehicle is in good condition because there's salties in there and if the engine fails there's no walking out of here!



Ah yes, you'll need food and rest so plan for these too!



When the “wheels come off” if you don’t have the spares you’ll be in trouble!



Finally, you’ll need someone you trust and can call upon to help you in times of emergency!



Mmmm! studs sheared and wheel went “walk about”. That wasn’t in the plan!

Ok, enough of the light hearted stuff. So now let’s look a little deeper into the matter of planning our journey with the destiny in view from a spiritual point of view.

Our Ultimate Destiny

To be able to plan we need to know what our destiny is. So, first of all, let me ask a question. As believers, what is our ultimate destiny?

Well, the stock standard answer will be something like, it has to do with being in the presence of God for all eternity enjoying and worshipping Him. Well, that may be correct in a way, but let us examine this matter a little deeper.

Jesus, in His prayer to the Father just prior to being crucified said (John 17:3) ... *“This is eternal life, that they may **know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

What that means for us is that **we need to personally and intimately know God** so we can understand what **He** primarily desires and ultimately intends for Himself and all of creation. Because our ultimate destiny is included in, and is part of, the fulfilment of **His** ultimate intention for Himself and all of creation. You see, our destiny is all about Him, His desires and His ultimate plan.

God and God alone must be the point of reference in all things in our lives, not self. Because, when the centre is wrong, we get everything wrong. We end up with misconceptions of our purpose and destiny and of why and how we are to get there.

Rom 15:4 ... *"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."*

So let's look at an example and learn from the scriptures.

In Exodus we read of a journey encountered by Moses and the children of Israel. A journey with a purpose, some surprises, many detours and an ultimate destination.

But let me ask a question. "Where was Moses taking the children of Israel when he left Egypt?" "What was his intended destiny for the people?" Most will say, "To the Promised Land". Well if we look at Ex 7:16 (NIV) we will find that Moses was sent to tell Pharaoh that God said, ... *"Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness."* He did not say, *"Let my people go, so that they may inherit a land."*

According to God's order of things, in line with His Master plan, Moses' duty was to first introduce the nation to the Promiser before taking them on to the Promised Land. Why? Because if he first led them into the Promised Land they would end up loving the promises more than the Promiser, God Himself. The focus would be on themselves, their comforts, and the fulfilment of their selfish desires with little or no thought given to God.

It was in the wilderness that Moses met and had a personal and deep encounter with God, and that's where God wanted him to take the people so they too could meet Him, get to know Him and worship Him, for who He is and not just for what they could get from Him.

Gods' main purpose in delivering Israel was so that they could have a personal encounter with Him and could come to know and love Him. God desired to reveal Himself to them so they could know Him. He wanted them to come to the personal understanding of His nature, character and attributes. In Ex 19:4 He said ... *"I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself."* Yet, from what we read in the scriptures of their self-focussed rebellious attitude and actions, they missed their destiny. They were self-focused and continually grumbling, forever wanting to go back to Egypt. Bunch of gutless backsliders! And so most of that generation didn't make it into the Promised Land.

Also, it is important for us to note that if Moses had led the children of Israel directly into the Promised Land they would have been totally unprepared for their encounter with the giants and enemy armies. Without the knowledge of God as their protector and strength they would have been overcome with fear and would have run like dogs with their tails between their legs back to Egypt, despite the fact that that would have returned them to slavery.

Because God knows that self-focus and selfishness will destroy us, and that we, without an intimate knowledge of Him and His strength, wisdom and power, will not be able to withstand the attacks of the enemy, His desire for every one of us is that we come to know Him personally, deeply and intimately. That's His priority for us according to His Master Plan. We are to start with Him, walk with Him and end with Him. That's our journey plan.

In our Journey in Christ we must focus **first** on knowing Him and worshipping Him for who He is. If our focus is mainly on what He can do for us and the seeking of blessings from Him rather than on learning who He is and intimately knowing Him, we would be like a person who gets married to a rich person just to get their money, not to love them. And that will end in unhappiness and disaster every time. The nature of our prayers reveal our hearts – do we mostly pray to get things from God or get Him to do something for us, or do we mostly focus on worshipping Him for who He is.

Ps 37:4 ... *“Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.”*

Matt 6:33 ... *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

The principle is simple: Once God is encountered, the promises all fall into perspective. So we must plan our journey according to God’s order. Let Him be the point of reference in all things at all times in your life. Let your gaze be upon Him, seek Him, follow His heart, His desires, and His plans – know Him. That’s the only way you’ll know His mind, His heart and His desires and plans for your life, and the manner in which you are to cooperate with Him to fulfil His ultimate intention for both Himself and you, as well as those whose lives you impact.

His Eternal Plan

According to Eph 1:4-5 ... *“He (the Father) chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we would be **holy and blameless** before Him. In love He predestined us to **adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*

God’s eternal plan, established before the foundation of the world, included bringing us to be able to stand before Him holy and blameless. His plan predestined us to the “adoption as sons.”

I think we all understand what being holy and blameless means, but how is that related to the “adoption as sons?” And what is the true meaning and significance of the term “adoption as sons?”

Now I must digress for a moment so we can have a better understanding in this matter. You see, in the Greek language there are four words used in the scriptures in respect of the various stages we go through in life namely:

- νήπιος (nēpios) – infant, one not yet speaking, a babe, the unlearned;
- παῖδιον (paidon) – child (in relation to parents, of either sex, at any stage of life from infancy to adulthood); they’re your children no matter how old they grow, they’re yours.
- τέκνον (teknon) – child; or τεκνίον (teknion) – little child
- υἱός (huios) – son (implies connection in respect of membership, service, resemblance, manifestation, destiny)

In just about all places in the gospels and epistles the first three of these Greek words will all be translated into our English Bibles as “child” or “children.” In a few cases the fourth word (huios) is also rendered (incorrectly) as “child”, but mostly it is correctly translated as “son” or “sons”.

Now with that understanding we go back to the question of, “What is the true meaning and significance of the term “adoption as sons”?

Rom 8:14-15 ... *“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons** of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”*

Eph 1:3-6 ... *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to **adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*

The words translated into English – “adoption as sons” – come from the Greek word υἰοθεσία (huiiothesia), which is a composite of the words υἱός (huios) which means “son”, and τίθημι (tithēmi) which means “to place” or “set.” So combining these two words the more literal translation is “placing or setting as a son.”

It is a term of **relation**, expressing our sonship in respect of **standing or position**.

In the west, adoption is the taking of a child from one family and making it a member of another family. But in the Greco-Roman culture of the day in which Paul is writing, a father adopted none as a son but his own child. Birth made him a child, adoption gave him sonship. Between birth as a child and adoption as a son there was growth, education and discipline.

An English writer R.B. Jones make this clear. “To be a son is infinitely more than to be a child, and the terms are never loosely used by the Holy Spirit. It is not the difference in relationship, but in position. Every ‘born again’ child of God has in him the nature of his Father, and is a beloved member of his father’s family. Adoption cannot make the child any nearer or dearer, yet it gives the child the status he did not enjoy before, a position he did not occupy. It is his recognition as an adult son, the attaining of his majority, the seal upon his growth to maturity of mind and character. A child is one born of God; a son is one taught of God. A child has God’s nature; a son has God’s character.”

Of Jesus Isaiah (Isa 9:6) says:

*... “For unto us a **child** is born, unto us a **son** is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

A **child** was born in a manger in Bethlehem; a **son** was recognised by the Father at His baptism in the Jordan when the Father said, “*This is My beloved **Son** in whom I am well pleased*” (Matt 3:17).

Of Jesus, the **Son** of God, Hebrews 1:1-3 says:

*... “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His **Son**, whom He **appointed heir** of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and **the exact representation of His nature**, and upholds all things by the word of His power.”*

Now back to Rom 8:14; the leading of the Spirit speaks of the **personal relationship** between the Holy Spirit and the believer. It's not saying the mere power or influence of the Spirit will pull us along regardless of whether we want to be pulled or not (we're not slaves being pulled along involuntarily), it is speaking of a definite personal choice and action on our part to be led by Him, to listen and obey Him, to walk in a full and permanent **relationship** of trust in and with Him. And this constant relating to and following of the Spirit as He teaches, guides and leads us to know Christ and live by His life, brings us to the maturity in Christ, to the point where the Spirit of adoption "places us as sons" – we, the **birthed children** of the Father, come to the status of being recognised and appointed by the Father as those **mature "sons"** who know and fully represent Him, and who go about business "in His name." This is the work of the "Spirit of adoption" – to bring us, the birthed **children** of God, to maturity as **sons** who know Whose they are – they intimately know Abba Father. Calling Him "Abba" implies an intimate and personal relationship with Him. He's not just a distant God who they have heard about. They personally and intimately know who He is and who He makes them to be – His appointed representatives, and, as Peter puts it (1 Pet 4:11), "*those who speak as it were the utterance of God.*" They are the true "*Ambassadors for Christ*" (2 Cor 5:20).

In Eph 4:12-13 Pauls speaks of us being built up until we attain the true knowledge of the Son of God and come to maturity, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

So our "sonship" implies that we constantly walk in spiritual maturity and liberty in Christ.

We become God's **children** by the birthing, by being born again, which refers to our relationship and union of nature. When we are said to become His **sons** by adoption (by placing) it refers to our position and privileges. The word "**son**" as distinct from "**child**" represents the believer as a full-grown son, recognised and "placed" as an adult member of God's family and household.

The chief mark of this full-grown sonship is – "**being led by the Spirit of God**" – which clearly implies willing, continual and conscious participation in and appropriation of the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This characteristic of adult sonship is the true meaning of "the Spirit of adoption". It is the coming to an attitude of whole-hearted trust, willing and joyous obedience, and complete consecration.

Gal 4:1-5 also speaks of the journey from infancy (nēpios – infant) to maturity and adoption (placing) as son. This passage tells us the (nēpios) infant is under guardians and managers or stewards until the date set by the father, when maturity is achieved and when the "adoption as son" takes place. The guardians and managers are there to teach the infant the ways of the father and the family and to bring them up to maturity and recognition as "son".

Similarly, John in 1 John 2:12-17 discusses the necessity of growth or transition from being little children to grown fathers. A transition to maturity in the personal and intimate knowledge of God.

The Pathway to Our Destiny

God's purpose and plan, established in eternity past, was that He intended for His Son to have a Body to express His life (Himself) in the world now, and before all creation in the ages to come.

Gods' intended pathway for us is **sonship, heirship, throneship**, and these phases can only become real as we are **continually led by the Spirit**.

This means we are to:

- **Participate** in His very life and purpose. Let Christ **live** in and through you. Be continually led by and walk in the Spirit.
- **Appropriate** all that God desires to share of Himself. Know Him. *"For of Him, and through Him and to Him are all things, to Him be the glory forever"* (Rom 11:36).
- **Qualify** through discipline for the throne.

Sonship, Heirship and Throneship are to be worked out experientially our lives through the pathway of participation, appropriation and qualifying.

The life, that is, the nature and Spirit of Christ come to us as a gift. But sonship, which is the putting on of Christ, having the mind of Christ, His vision, purpose and dedication are all the product of training, overcoming, discipline, trial, hardship, and intensive spiritual qualifying.

Rom 8:17 tells us we are joint heirs with Christ. By the birthing, being born into the Father's family, we gain the **right** to heirship, but being **appointed** heir and participation in all heirship means comes only to those who live in accordance with the Father's ultimate plan and intention. We must choose to continually receive from the Holy Spirit whatever the Father desires to impart to us of His mind, purpose, and vision. This is essential for our growth and development of character. He longs for us to come to (Eph 4:13) ... *"the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."*

On this journey God will lead us through a huge variety of experiences, most of which will be incomprehensible when not viewed in the light of His eternal purpose. Each of these crucible experiences are designed to bring forth in us a fuller participation in heirship.

While we are heirs by birth, there is much the Father can only share with those sufficiently mature to appropriate. So our small capacity must be enlarged before He can share all He longs to share of His light and His love.

2 Tim 2:11-12 ... *"It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him."*

Sonship, heirship, and finally, throneship. Ruling and reigning with Christ throughout eternity.

Heb 5:8-9 ... *"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."*

Rom 8:17 speaks of us as ... *"heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."*

Throneship speaks of the glory which will come after suffering which results from learning obedience. Not any kind of suffering, just that which comes from learning obedience.

God's first call to man was to rulership over the earth, and His last call to us is throneship with Him above the highest heaven. That's our destiny.

Conclusion

The journey of our lives as believers is not to be seen through the foggy glass of finitude, but through the clearer vision of God Himself, who has given us the victory.

As we travel on life's journey, day by day, step at a time, let us be those who are willingly and continually led by the Spirit on the pathway of sonship, heirship and throneship through participation, appropriation and qualifying. May we walk towards the Father's ultimate intention ... *"that God may be all in all"* (1 Cor 15: 28).

Prov 4:18 ... *"The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day."*

Rom 8:22-30 ... *"For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our **adoption as sons**, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to **His purpose**. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become **conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."*

On your journey, following the Father's eternal plan, as you participate, appropriate and qualify, I trust you'll be blessed on your way towards sonship, heirship and throneship, and will finally be presented before the Father holy and blameless and hear His words, "Well done good and faithful servant, you've run the race, fought the fight and now here's your crown of righteousness, welcome to an eternity of ruling and reigning with Me."

Jude 24 ... *"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen".*

Amen!