

Being adopted by God

By Pastor Chris Costrini

Venango Community Church

“For the Law,” we are told in John 1: 17, “was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John, it seems, sets up a distinction between Moses’ work and Christ’s work. Moses brought Law, Jesus brought grace. The Law, Paul argues, brings death (I Corinthians 15: 56), while grace brings us life.

We would think, if this is so, that Christ would have eliminated the Law. But he insists that he did not come to destroy the Law, but to “fulfill it” (Matthew 5: 17). In fact Jesus’ birth as a Jewish human, under the authority and structure of Moses’ law, seems to have been a necessary element in our salvation.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4: 4-5). As the second person of the Trinity, Jesus could have come to us as above the law, not under it. He, as God, gave the law. However, He chose, as one “born of woman,” to subject himself to the law that he had laid out for the people of Israel to follow.

Adoption is a beautiful picture of what God does for us at salvation. We once were alien to him because our sin separates us. But God adopts us, makes us His children. Paul’s words in Galatians hint to us that this happens only because of Christmas, only because Jesus chose to become human.

Why is this? It has to do with the cross. Christmas, with God becoming flesh, allows that God could die on our behalf. It is only in submission to the law that Jesus could be the perfect sinless sacrifice on our behalf. He was “born of woman, born under the law” so that by his death we might have peace with God and adoption as His sons.