



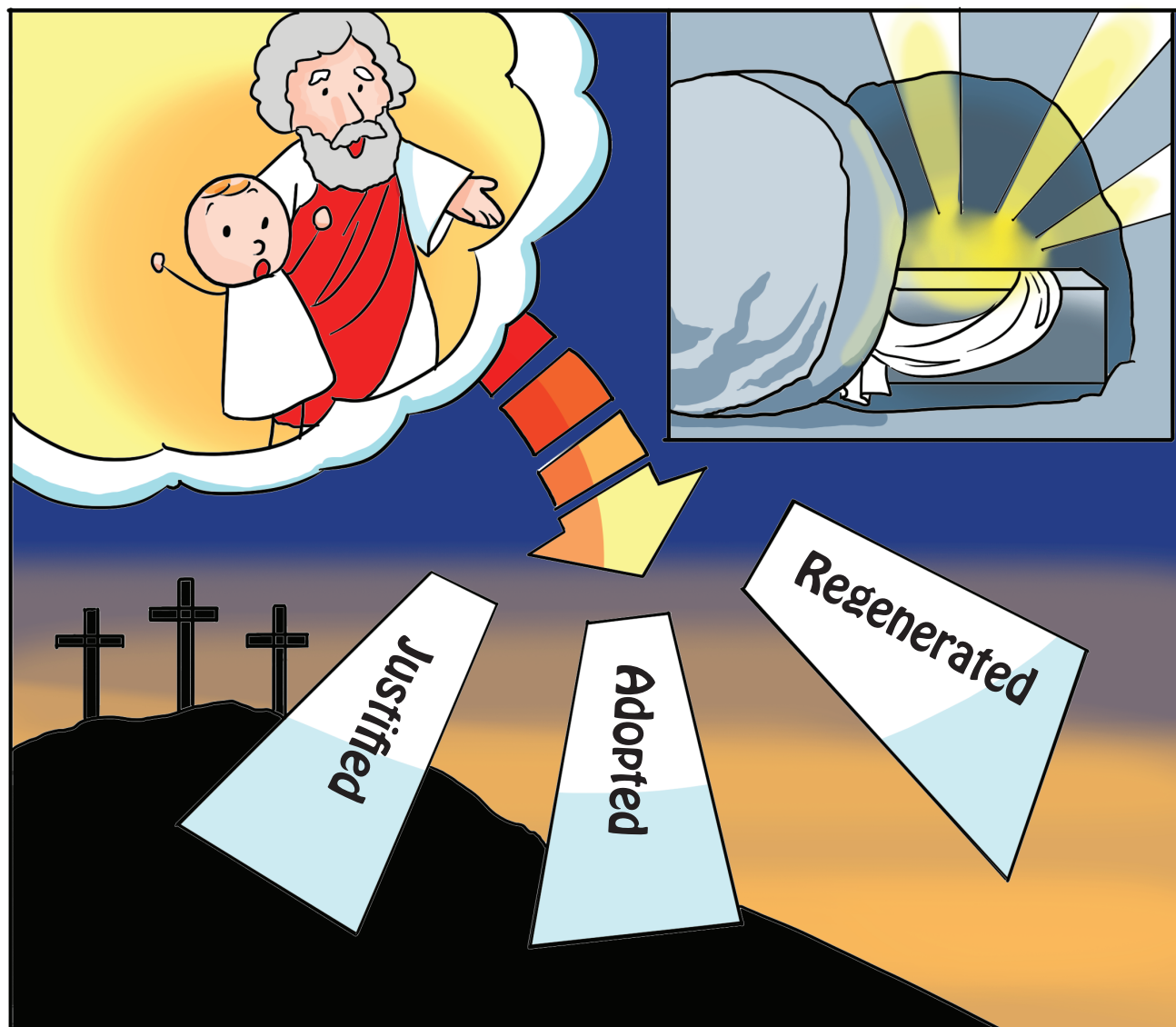
# Heart of It All, No. 6: God's Plan of Salvation, Part 2

In "Heart of It All, No. 5: God's Plan of Salvation, Part 1," we looked at four concepts that illustrate how God's plan of redemption works—how it reconciles us with God and saves us from the punishment for our sins.

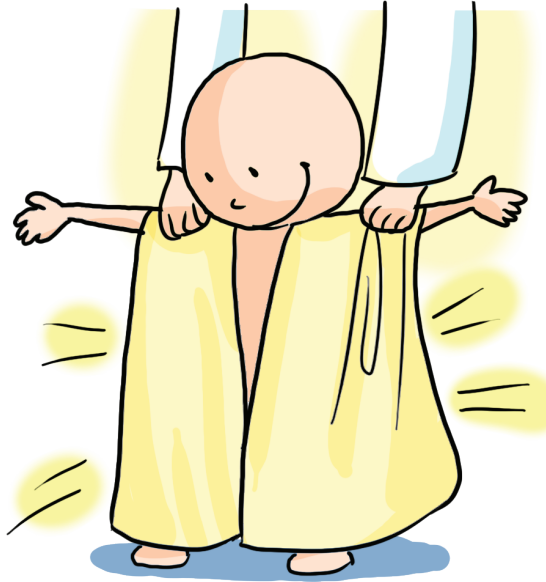
God's love for us is the motivation behind His plan of salvation, and that love was manifested in the death of His Son, Jesus, as an offering for our sins.

The sacrificial death of Jesus resulted in a changed relationship between God and us.

Three significant results of Jesus' death and resurrection are being justified, adopted, and regenerated.



# Justification



The word justify used in the New Testament is the Greek word *dikaioo*. One of its definitions is to “declare someone to be righteous.” Our being justified means that God declares us righteous. This doesn’t mean that we who have received His gift of salvation are now sinless, but it means that our sins were placed on Jesus, and are seen as His, while His righteousness was placed on us, and His righteousness is seen by God as ours.

All of this is God’s doing, not our own. There is nothing we could do or achieve to deserve this forgiveness and righteousness. In His love He made the way for us to be righteous in His sight—not by our works or good deeds, but by His grace, mercy, and love. It’s a gift of love, costly on God’s side, free on ours.

*By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8–9 ESV.*

As Christians, though we still sin, our status of having the righteousness of Christ does not change. We no longer need to question whether we've done enough or are close enough to God to be worthy of salvation. God has done it all, and through Jesus' death and resurrection we are and will always be seen as righteous by God.

When we sin, we need to repent and ask God to forgive us, as well as make an effort to become stronger in resisting temptation. However, sin doesn't cause us to lose salvation or justification, and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Oh, no!



It's still here.



I'm sorry.  
Please forgive me.



# Adoption

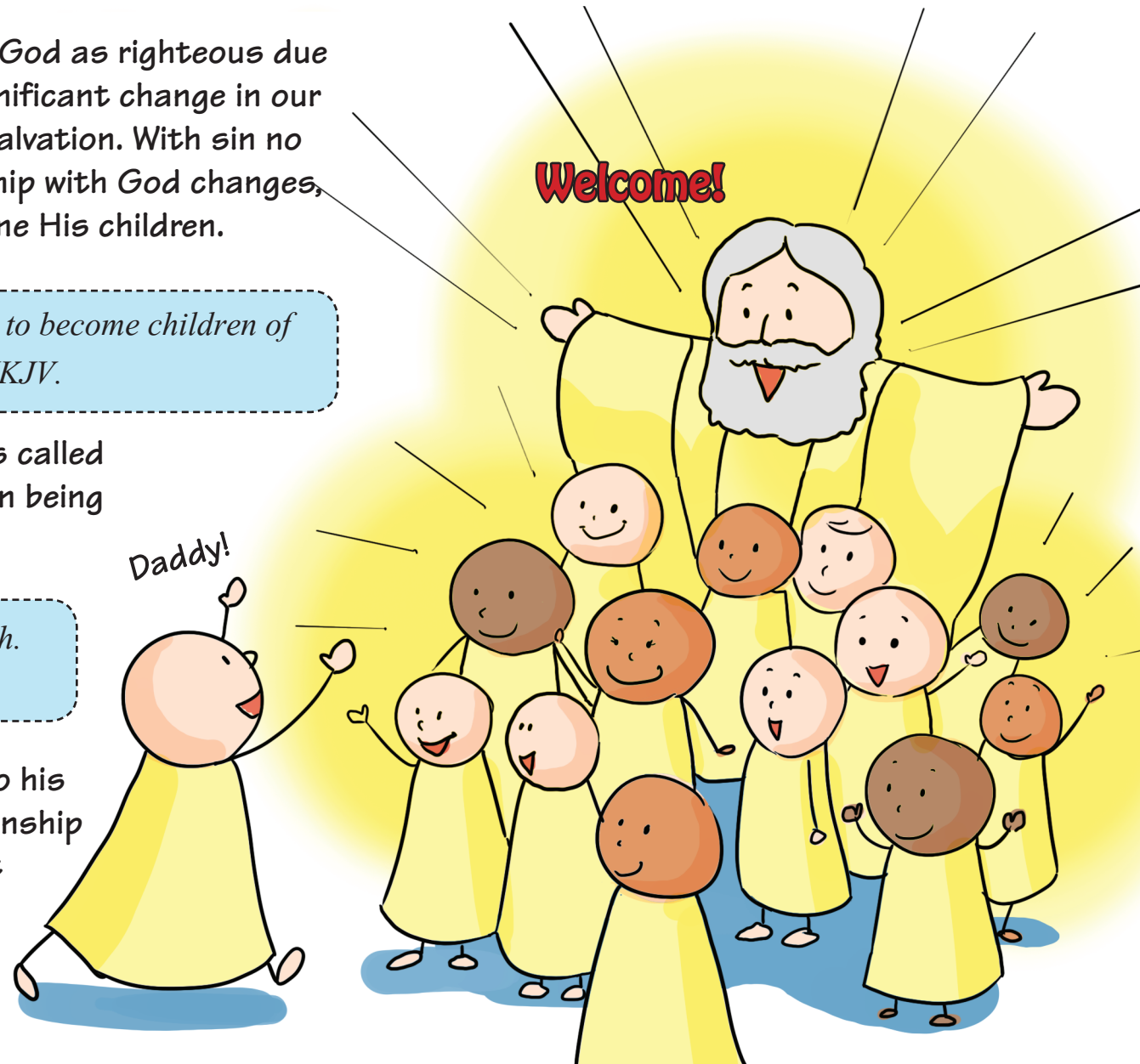
Besides justification, whereby we are seen by God as righteous due to Jesus' sacrifice, we experience another significant change in our position and relationship with God through salvation. With sin no longer separating us from God, our relationship with God changes, as we become part of God's family—we become His children.

*As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. John 1:12 NKJV.*

This entry into God's family as His children, is called adoption. We now have a relationship based on being members of God's family. God is our Father.

*In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. Galatians 3:26 ESV.*

We can now relate to God as a child relates to his or her loving father. It is a much closer relationship than what existed ever before, even than what existed previously in Old Testament times.







This closeness to God as Father, and His love for us, is seen in things that Jesus said about His Father:

*Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Matthew 6:26 ESV.*

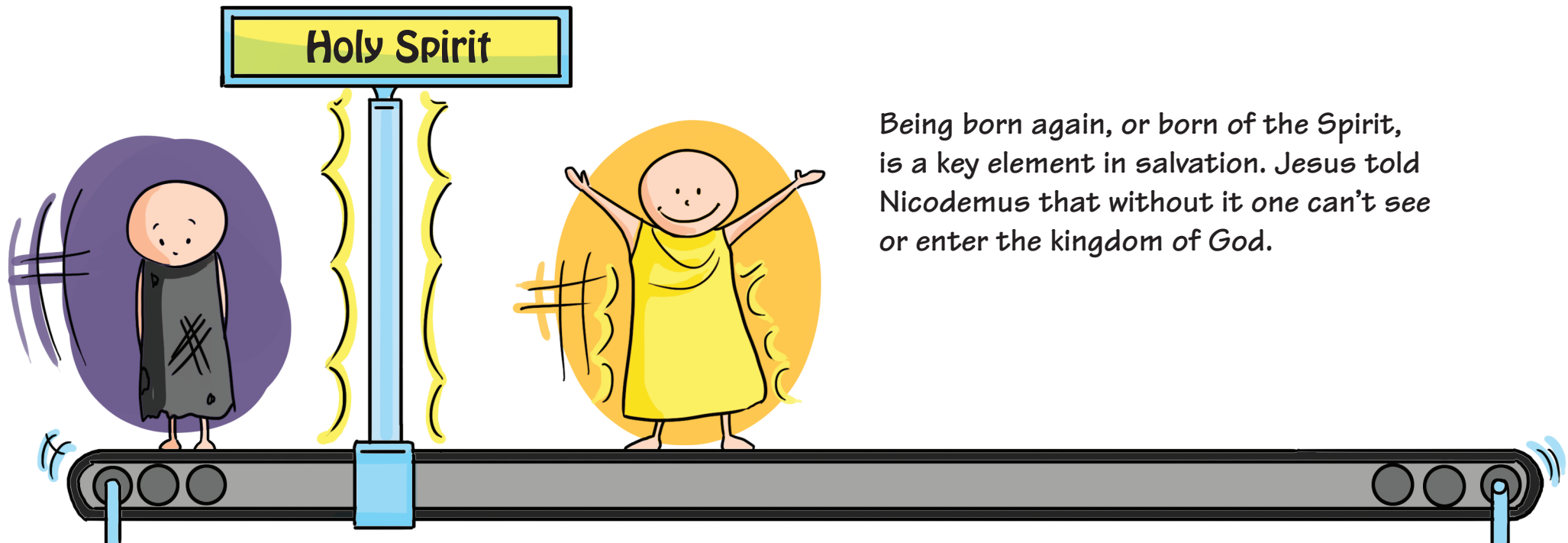
*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Matthew 7:11 ESV.*

God didn't have to invite us into His family, He didn't have to adopt us, but He did. Adoption is an act of love by someone who is not obligated to take in, care for, and love a child—it is by choice. God doesn't adopt us because of how great or wonderful we are, or because we do good things for Him. He adopts us because He loves us.

# Regeneration

Another result of Jesus' death and resurrection in the lives of believers is a regeneration, which means a spiritual change, becoming a new person.

The Holy Spirit transforms the redeemed person's sinful nature in a way that brings a spiritual change in the person. This new birth is the fresh foundation on which the new Christian begins his or her spiritual life, and from that point forward can grow in it.



Being born again, or born of the Spirit, is a key element in salvation. Jesus told Nicodemus that without it one can't see or enter the kingdom of God.

This rebirth is a result of belief in and acceptance of Jesus' atoning sacrifice for us. When someone believes in and accepts Jesus as their Savior, they are reborn. The person may or may not feel the change, but the change has occurred. They are born of God because they have believed in Him.

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17–18 ESV.*

*To put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4: 24 ESV.*





The apostle Paul made reference to regeneration as being the work of the Holy Spirit as well.

*I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. Ezekiel 36:26 ESV.*

God's loving plan of salvation has justified us so that we are seen by Him as righteous.

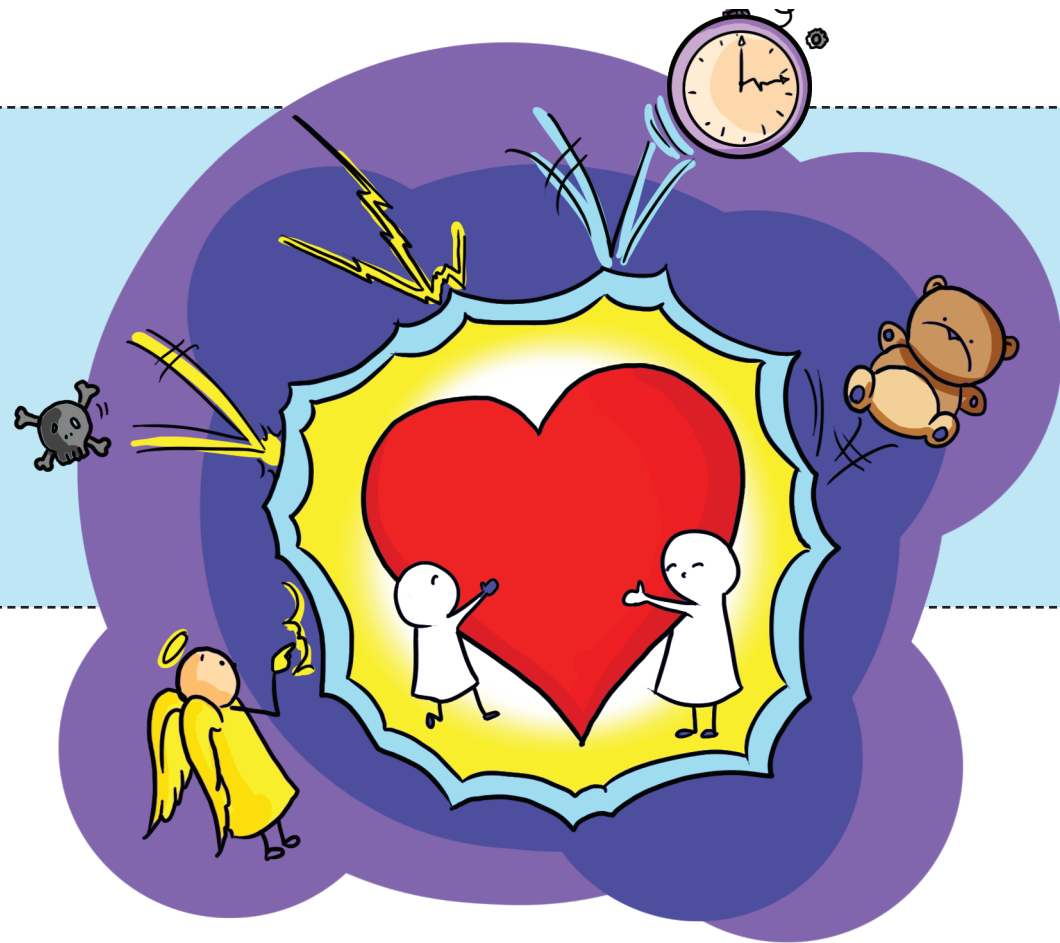
- We have become His children by adoption.
- We are members of His family and no longer separated from Him.
- We are heirs of eternal salvation and of God's other promises.
- We also become a new creation, as we are born again.



These precious gifts are the fruits of God's costly love, of Jesus laying down His life for us. We have been reconciled to God, and nothing will change that.

*I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38 ESV.*

May we truly understand and appreciate the deep love God has for humanity through all He has done for us.



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