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Tertullian of Carthage on the Gospel

We're sometimes asked "Are you sure the adoption of humanity is the gospel? I've never heard it before." Many people find difficult to believe, for example, that the ascended Son of God remains forever incarnate, fully human and fully God forever. In this light we find it helpful to go back to the ancient Christians who saw the gospel in light of humanity's adoption into the Triune Life.

Around 190 A.D. Tertullian of Carthage wrote about the assurance of eternal life that we have because humanity is now permanently adopted into the Triune Life through the Son's permanent incarnation. Here's what Tertullian wrote:

Jesus is still sitting there at the right hand of the Father, man, yet God—the last Adam, yet the primary Word—flesh and blood, yet purer than ours . . . He keeps in His own self the deposit of the flesh which has been committed to Him by both parties—the pledge and security of its entire perfection. For as "He has given to us the earnest of the Spirit," so has He received from us the earnest of the flesh, and has carried it with Him into heaven as a pledge of that complete entirety which is one day to be restored to it. Be not disquieted, O flesh and blood, with any care; in Christ you have acquired both heaven and the kingdom of God. Otherwise, if they say that you are not in Christ, let them also say that Christ is not in heaven, since they have denied you heaven. *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, Chapter 51.