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St. Irenaeus on the Recapitulation of Humanity

We're sometimes asked "Are you sure the adoption of humanity is the gospel? I've never heard it before." That's why we like to bring in the thoughts of various theologians from throughout history to add to our understanding of the gospel.

This text is from *Against All Heresies*, by St. Irenaeus, who was bishop of Lyon in the late 2nd and early 3rd century.

For it behooved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem humanity under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, human; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, *so that sin should be destroyed by a human being, and humanity should go forth from death*. For as by the disobedience of the one man who was originally molded from virgin soil, the many were made sinners, and forfeited life; so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man, who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation. Thus, then, was the Word of God made human, as also Moses says: "God, true are His works." But if, not having been made flesh, He did appear as if flesh, His work was not a true one. But what He did appear, that He also was: *God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of humanity, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify humanity*; and therefore His works are true. ~ *Against All Heresies*, Book 3, Chapter 18, paragraph 7 (emphases ours.)