

# Adoption

## ADOPTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

**OUR SPIRITUAL ADOPTION** - In light of the recent post on Abba, it is only fitting that we explore the NT doctrine of adoption, one of the most consoling, comforting and encouraging truths in Scripture. While most saints understand that salvation brings God's forgiveness of sins and deliverance from divine condemnation, they do not fully comprehend adoption, one of the priceless crown jewels of our "great salvation" (Heb 2:3-note). **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** observed that "for some inexplicable reason, it is a doctrine about which we very rarely hear. How often have you heard sermons on it?" Indeed noted Bible teacher **Warren Wiersbe** feels that a proper "understanding of **adoption** is important if you and I are to enjoy our Christian life to the fullest." **J I Packer** goes even further, adding that an understanding of our adoption is the foundation of a vibrant, victorious Christian walk, writing that "If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the NT new and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God." Note that while this post will use the term "**sons of God**" obviously "sons" includes daughters for the Lord Almighty declares "I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and DAUGHTERS to Me." (2Co 6:17-18-note, cf Isa 43:6-note).

**WHAT IS SPIRITUAL ADOPTION?** Our English word **adoption** is filled with the ideas of love, grace, compassion and intimate relationship. In the ancient world the adopted person lost all rights in his old family, gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new family and "In the most literal sense, and in the most binding legal way, he got a new father (cf 1Jn 3:1-note)." (Barclay). In addition, all his debts were legally canceled (cf Col 2:14-note), his old life was completely erased and he was regarded by the law as a new person (cf 2Cor 5:17-note). Similarly, in spiritual adoption, the moment undeserving sinners are adopted by their heavenly Father as His sons, their entire status is eternally changed -- they receive a new name, a new family, new rights, new expectations, but unlike human adoption they also receive a new nature, actually becoming "partakers of the divine nature!" (2Pe 1:4-note) Indeed, it is probably not an overstatement to regard spiritual adoption as the greatest benefit of "the Gospel of our salvation." (Eph 1:13-note) **John Piper** agrees remarking that "Adoption is one of the most profound realities in the universe. I say "universe" and not "world" because adoption goes beyond the world. It is greater than the world and it is before the world in the plan of God (Eph 1:4-note "before the foundation of the world"), and it will outlast the world as we know it. Indeed it is greater than the "universe" and is rooted in God's own nature." The Greek word for adoption is **Huiothesia** which literally means the "placing of a son" which in turn came to mean placing a son into a family that was not one's biologic family. While there were allusions to adoption in the OT (cf Mephibosheth crippled by a fall [does that sound familiar?], "adopted" by a King, invited to dine in the intimacy of the king's table all the days of his life [cf Rev 3:20-note] and graciously given an undeserved inheritance! [Do any of these "benefits" sound familiar?] 2Sa 9:1-13-note), the scope of divine adoption was not fully revealed until the NT in the writings of Paul who used huiothesia 5x (Ro 8:15, 23, Ro 9:4-note, Gal 4:5-note, Ep 1:5) to describe our spiritual adoption, which is the PAST, PRESENT and PROSPECTIVE (future) possession and privilege of every believer!

While **adoption** is not the way we get into God's family, it is the way we come to fully enjoy God's family. "Adoption gives us the rights of children. Regeneration gives us the nature of children: we are partakers of both of these, for we are sons." (Spurgeon) In other words, we get into God's family by **regeneration** (being "born again" = the new birth) when we are "born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:7-9-note), for "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children (literally "born ones") of God, even to those who believe in His name." (Jn 1:12-note) In regeneration the Spirit makes us children of God, while in adoption He gives us the position, privilege and responsibilities of the "sons of God." God could have regenerated us (a new life), but, praise His Holy Name, He also graced us with adoption as His sons. As **Wayne Grudem** says "When we begin to realize the excellence of these blessings (as adopted sons of God), and when we appreciate that God has no obligation to give us any of them, then we will be able to exclaim with the apostle John, "How great is the love the Father has lavished (bestowed profusely) on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are!" (1Jn 3:1NIV-note) Indeed, "How Great Thou Art!"

**ILLUSTRATION OF ADOPTION:** A young mother wrote: "I stayed with my parents for several days after the birth of our first child. One afternoon, I remarked to my mother that it was surprising our baby had dark hair, since both my husband and I are fair. "She said, 'Well, your daddy has black hair.' "But, Mama, that doesn't matter because I'm adopted." "With an embarrassed smile, she said the most wonderful words I've ever heard: 'I always FORGET!'" (Reader's Digest) And in a similar way, as God's adopted children, we too should come to cherish our heavenly Father's choice to forget our wayward past (Ps 103:12-note, Isa 38:17-note, Isa 44:22-note, Mic 7:18,19-note, note), and to treat us as His sons and daughters, as His blessed children who because of His grace

and unconditional love will forever enjoy full family privileges. **Thomas Watson** alludes to the wonder of God's choice to adopt us reminding us that "God has a Son of His own and such a Son, how wonderful God's love in adopting us! We needed a Father, but He did not need sons!"

**PAST ADOPTION:** Paul explains that our Father "chose us in (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should 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 (literally = graced) on us in the Beloved (Son)." (Eph 1:4-6-note) From these passages we can see that our adoption was planned by our Father in eternity past, was made possible in time by His beloved Son, and finally was made effective by the Spirit. Indeed, the Son of God, willingly became the Son of Man, that the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2-note, Eph 5:6-note), sons of Adam (Ro 5:12-note, 1Cor 15:22-note), sons of the devil (Jn 8:38, 41, 44-note, 1Jn 3:8-note, 1Jn 3:10-note, Mt 13:38-note) might be adopted as the sons of God and receive the gift of "the Spirit of His Son" (Gal 4:6-note [R M M'Cheyne]), Who is the Father's "pledge (Gk = down payment, earnest money, "engagement ring") of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." (Eph 1:14-note, 2Co 1:22-note, 2Co 5:5-note) Indeed, our sonship leads to heirship (**FUTURE ADOPTION** - see below). So even as earthly adoptive parents exercise free choice, so too did God. He had a natural Son and did not need to adopt other sons, but choose to do so based on His costly love, His provision of "grace upon grace" (Eph 1:4-5-note, Jn 1:16-note) accomplishing it all for His glory (Ep 1:6a-note, cf Ps 115:1-note). How can we not respond with hearts overflowing with gratitude and a Spirit enabled desire to "be imitators of God, as beloved children" (Eph 5:1-note), motivated by filial love, not pharisaical legalism.

**PRESENT ADOPTION:** Paul's readers were familiar with Roman laws governing adoption, the most famous example being Julius Caesar's adoption of Octavius as his son and his legal heir, which allowed him to succeed his father as emperor Caesar Augustus. It was into this cultural-political background that Paul introduced the glorious doctrine of spiritual adoption, albeit not by an earthly emperor, but by the "great King" Who alone "reigns over the nations" (Mal 1:14-note, Ps 45:6-note), proclaiming that "you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again (slavery to sin brings slavery to fear, esp fear of God's righteous judgment, cf Ro 8:1-note), but you have received a **spirit of adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are **children of God**, and if children, **heirs** also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him." (Ro 8:15-17-note)

To the saints in Galatia Paul explained that "when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law (which Jesus kept perfectly), in order that He might redeem (pay the price to set slaves free [1Pe 1:18,19-note]. Redemption brought about a change of masters) those who were under (subject to) the Law, that we might receive the **adoption as sons**. And because you are **sons**, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "**Abba! Father!**" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God." (Gal 4:4-7-note). We do well to continually ponder the amazing truth that because the Son of God cried "Abba! Father!" in the Garden and submitted to His Father's will (Mk 14:36-note), He gained the right for us, His adopted brethren, to cry "Abba! Father!"

**SOME PRIVILEGES OF PRESENT SONSHIP:** We can now experience freedom from fear of condemnation, for our Father has not "given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2Ti 1:7KJV-note, cf release from fear of death - Heb 2:14, 15-note). In short, God says we need no longer fear condemnation (Ro 8:1-note), for our acceptance in His family is not based upon our performance but our position as sons, fully and eternally "accepted in the Beloved." Amen! (Eph 1:6KJV-note) We can daily bask in a Spirit awakened assurance that we truly belong to God (cf Gal 4:6-note [CHS]). And we can forever enter into intimate and confident communion with "Abba," our "Dear Father!" **Kenneth Wuest** encourages us as to meditate frequently on our sonship - "THINK OF IT (cf Php 4:8-note), to occupy a place in God's family in which He loves us just as much as He loves His only-begotten Son (ponder the profundity of Jesus' prayer in Jn 17:26!-note - Read CHS' sermon!). THINK OF IT, to have a place in God's family just as eternal and secure as His only-begotten Son (cf Jn 10:28, 29-note). THINK OF IT, to have a place in God's family in which all the loveliness of God's Son is ours (cf Solomon's words to his beloved - Song 2:16-note). Paul also reminds us that sons have the privilege of suffering now with Jesus and sharing later in His glory (Ro 8:17-note). As someone has said "The ultimate privilege of life is to be entrusted with God's glory. God puts us through suffering that He might be able to share His glory with us (cf 1Pe 4:14-note). That is an amazing thing!" **Thomas Watson** adds that "Affliction is a badge of adoption." Calvin agreed that "Persecutions are in a way seals of adoption to the children of God." Finally, while divine discipline is not enjoyable when we are experiencing it (speaking from painful personal experience!), we would be remiss to not acknowledge divine discipline as a great benefit of adoption for "God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?" adding that "if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons." (Heb 12:7, 8-note) Divine discipline is also evidence of our Father's love (Heb 12:6-note) and is "for our good that we may share His holiness" (cf Job 5:17-note [AM]) and ultimately "produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Heb 12:10,11-note) So even when we are chastened by our Father, we praise Him, acknowledging that "reproofs for discipline are the way of life." (Pr 6:23-note)

**FUTURE ADOPTION:** The best is yet to come! Our adoption as sons of God makes us joint-heirs of the everlasting Kingdom of the

King of kings and Lord of lords! (Rev 19:16-[note](#), cf Da 7:27-note). In a wondrous display of God's marvelous grace, one day in the future God's own sons and daughters will actually inherit "the unfathomable riches of Christ!" (Eph 3:8-note), "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for" us! (1Pe 1:4-note) Spurgeon encourages us to meditate on "what the everlasting God will give to His equal Son, Who took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men and Who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (Php 2:7,8-note)." He then adds "Never mind how poor and needy you are...lift your head. Envy no man his dukedom. Think no man's princship worth coveting. You are greater than the greatest, for you are joint heir with Christ. In dignified relationship, you have no superior upon earth. And except those who are joint heirs with you, you have no equal since you are joint heir with Christ!" John writes that in the New Heaven God promises that "He who overcomes shall inherit these things (What things? See Rev 21:1-6-[note](#) and the 7 promises to overcomers in Rev 2:7,11,17,26-[note](#), Rev 3:5,12,21-[note](#), where "overcomers" describes EVERY son or daughter of God [1Jn 5:4,5-[note](#)]), and I will be his God and he will be My son." (Rev 21:7-[note](#)) As **Watson** says "The world is but a great inn, where we are to stay a night or two, and be gone; what madness is it so to set our heart upon our inn, as to forget our home." Another has said "Unless there is within us a yearning for that which is above us, we shall soon yield to that which is about us." And so Paul adds that one day in the future "we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan (inwardly crying sorrowfully for deliverance from the things present which are painful, passing and unsatisfying) within ourselves, waiting eagerly (expectantly as our daily lifestyle) for our ADOPTION AS SONS, the redemption of our body" (Ro 8:23-note) adding that "we eagerly wait (in great anticipation) for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." (Php 3:20,21-note) Yes, we have been redeemed and adopted in the PAST, are now experiencing the firstfruits in the PRESENT, but one great day in the FUTURE will experience the consummation of our redemption (Eph 4:30-note) and adoption, that great day when we will see Jesus face to face "and will be like Him," (1Jn 3:2-note), glorified brethren of whom Jesus is not ashamed (cf Heb 2:10, 11-note), God's sons and daughters finally and forever free from the pain, the presence and even the passing pleasure of sin! Hallelujah! Maranatha! Amen!

Abba, Father grant us the Spirit's enablement that we might sing to you prayerfully with great passion the beautiful words "How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that He should give His only Son and make a wretch His treasure. How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turns His face away, as wounds which mar the Chosen One, BRING MANY SONS TO GLORY!" Thank you Dearest Father. Amen

**Let us Worship our Father in Spirit and Truth as the words of this modern hymn...**

**[How Deep the Father's Love for Us — by Fernando Ortega](#)**

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His Only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory.

**ASSORTED NOTES AND QUOTES  
ON SPIRITUAL ADOPTION**

The privileges of the adopted sons of God surpass those of even the angels. As God's sons and daughters we are made one in the new covenant with our Brother, the Son of God, ties the angel cannot comprehend. God is our Father in a way the angels be. We have feelings at the communion table in which they cannot participate and we have a song of praise which they cannot sing. It is true that they have no experience of your sorrows; but they know not the comforts of that mercy which heals the broken heart.

**Spurgeon**

They are children of His family, and come to Him as children come to a father, with loving confidence. Think of being made a son of God, a son of Him that made the heavens, a son of Him who is God over all, blessed forever. Can any man deserve that? Certainly not. This also must come as a gift. - **Perfect Praise**

**God's adoptive love is selective (God did not have to adopt us, for He had a Son and an Heir. In love God made a conscious choice of His will to do so, Eph 1:5), is extensive (extending beyond family boundaries), is creative (provides a new identity, 2Cor 5:17), is legal (inheritance is guaranteed forever, "imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved for us in heaven" 1Pe 1:4) and is redemptive (gives freedom to one in fear or bondage, Ro 8:15). The gains of**

**heaven will more than compensate for the losses on earth.**

Adoption is something hoped for (cf 1Jn 3:2, 3) as well as something already possessed. Adoption is deliverance from the past (cf regeneration and justification), our position and our way of life in the present (walking by the Spirit, sanctification), and our future blessed hope (redemption of our bodies at the resurrection, glorification). It describes the process of becoming a child of God (cf. John 1:12; 1 John 3:1–2) and receiving an inheritance from God (cf. Col. 3:24).

We are waiting for “the adoption,” which is the redemption of the body when Christ returns (Phil. 3:20–21). This is the thrilling climax to “the adoption” that took place at conversion when “the Spirit of adoption” gave us an adult standing in God’s family. When Christ returns, we shall enter into our full inheritance. Meanwhile, we wait and hope. “For we are saved by that hope” (Ro 8:24, literal translation). What hope? “That blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). The best is yet to come! The believer does not get frustrated as he sees and experiences suffering and pain in this world. He knows that the temporary suffering will one day give way to eternal glory.

**No man is poor  
who is heir to all the riches of God!**

Forbes list the richest men in the world each year, but always misses the absolute richest - the adopted sons of God! Beloved, we are Rich! We are heirs of “the unfathomable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8), “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2Cor 8:9) What will this look like? Spiritual bodies (1Cor 15:42-44) which are imperishable and immortal (1Cor 15:51-54), God dwelling “with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” ’ (Rev 21:3–4), No longer will there be any curse, eternal service to God Whose face we will see and with whom we “will reign for ever and ever.” (Rev 22:3-5) Hallelujah! The day is coming with we will enter into the full inheritance of “the unfathomable riches in Christ!” (Eph 3:8) This beloved is our blessed inheritance. Should it not make “the things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace?”

**P H Davids**

**Adoption, however, is not entirely a past event. The legal declaration may have been made and the Spirit may have been given as a down payment, but the consummation of the adoption awaits the future, for adoption includes “the redemption of our bodies” (Ro 8:23). Thus adoption is something hoped for (cf 1Jn 3:2, 3) as well as something already possessed. Adoption, then, is deliverance from the past (cf regeneration and justification), our position and our way of life in the present (walking by the Spirit, sanctification), and our future blessed hope (redemption of our bodies at the resurrection, glorification). It describes the process of becoming a child of God (cf. John 1:12; 1 John 3:1–2-note) and receiving an inheritance from God (cf. Col. 3:24). (Evangelical dictionary of theology)**

An appreciation of the doctrine of our **adoption** as **sons of God** motivates us to discipline ourselves for godliness (1Ti 4:7, 8 -note). Paul explains it this way...

**Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. “And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty. (2Cor 6:17, 18)**

**Therefore (term of conclusion = because we are sons and daughters of the Most High God!), having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2Cor 7:1-note) (Note how truth rightly received, truly transforms!)**

John teaches us a similar principle that **LOOKING** motivates **LIVING**. In other words as we ponder the certainty of our Lord's return to take us home, this truth serves to strengthen our hearts and minds, motivating and energizing us to live in dependence on the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7), for the glory of the Father (Mt 5:16-note, Php 2:15-note). And so John expounds the great truth that at first hearing sounds even unbelievable to our ears, but which the Spirit uses to stir our hearts...

**See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn 3:1-3-note)**

The hope of becoming like Christ in the future ignites our desire to become like Him in the present. In response to God's love and

this future hope, we obey Christ's commands and trust that presently God is transforming us into Christ's likeness through the Spirit (2Cor 3:18).

**Glorification** saves us from the **presence** and even the passing **pleasure** of sin, for in our Father's presence we will have fullness of joy and in (His) right hand there are pleasures forever. (Ps 16:11) No more death, crying, heartache, pain, sin (cf Rev 21).

In distinction to human adoption, spiritual adoption is the act of God by which He gives each of His children an adult standing in His family. When a couple adopts a child, it is a beautiful experience. They can give that child their name, their address, their home, their wealth; but they cannot give that adopted child their nature. That child will always have the nature of his or her (biologic) parents.

**"The Great Wait"** (cf Eschatological = future things) (Ro 8:23, 1Jn 3:2,3)

**Someone has said that all of life is a "Great Wait." That's true you you are sons of God. We wait for the full revelation of our adoption which is the freedom from the corruption of this present world. Our ultimate privilege as sons is one day (soon) of being like the Son. And then we will finally realize that the wait was more than worth it!. This is my eager expectation: that one day the Father will come through the door, adoption papers in hand. And He won't leave without me. The reason we are going to heaven is because that's where your Dearest Father lives. Heaven is our real home. We are just passing through this world while our mansions are being prepared for our eternal habitation. "The cattle upon a thousand hills" belong to our Father. United to Him, the Ruler of the universe, we become true royalty. When things look dark and the world mistreats you, take heart, believer. The day is coming when your true identity will be revealed at the ". . . manifestation of the sons of God" (Ro 8:19). We may not amount to much in the eyes of men, but God views us as His dear children and "heirs of the Kingdom"! The salvation we enjoy is just a small taste of the glory we will share with Christ in heaven. We may not look like sons of God now, but the full family likeness is sure to come. 1Jn 3:2, Php 3:21**

**Wayne Grudem** on present Suffering

**we have the privilege of sharing both in his sufferings and in his subsequent glory. Just as it was "necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory" (Luke 24:26), so God gives us the privilege of walking the same path that Christ walked, enduring sufferings in this life that we may also receive great glory in the life to come: "if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Ro. 8:17). (Acts 14:22) ([Systematic Theology- An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine- Wayne Grudem](#)).**

**Wiersbe**

We are now heirs and joint heirs with Christ. That means everything we inherit comes through Christ. There are two names on the check: Our Lord Jesus signs the check, and we have to sign the check. This is what prayer is all about. This is why we come "in the name of Jesus," because apart from Him we can inherit nothing. You and I were born rich in Jesus Christ. We have the riches of His grace, the riches of His wisdom, and the riches of His mercy. We can draw upon all of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus....

Are you living up to (or squandering) your privileges? If you are a Christian, you have been adopted, you have an adult standing in the family of God. With this standing comes responsibility. We don't run away from suffering. We don't waste our inheritance. We are sure that we are born again, and we share this with others. We have the privilege of speaking to and for God and the freedom of walking with God. What privileges we have! ([Key Words of the Christian Life- Understanding and Applying Their Meanings- Warren W. Wiersbe](#))

**G B Wilson** so eloquently phrased it

He who was the Son by nature willingly took the form of a servant (Php 2:7-8) so that we who were by nature the servants of sin (Ro 6:6, Ro 6:12, Jn 8:34, Pr 5:22-note) might become sons by the adoption of grace!

**MORE TO FOLLOW**

Every blessing that comes from God is sent with the self-same message: "And more to follow." "I forgive you your sins, but there's more to follow." "I justify you in the righteousness of Christ, but there's more to follow." "I adopt you into my family, but there's more to follow." "I educate you for Heaven, but there's more to follow." "I give you grace upon grace, but there's more to follow." "I have helped you even to old age, but there's still more to follow." "I will uphold you in the hour of death, and as you are passing into the world of spirits, my mercy shall still continue with you, and when you land in the world to come there shall still be 'More to

follow.”—C. H. Spurgeon

### Ray Pritchard

Two great results flow to us as a result of Christ's coming to the world (Gal 4:5). First, we are completely set free from the old system of rules and commandments. Second, we now receive the “full rights” of sons and daughters. All the benefits of salvation are now given to those who believe in Jesus Christ. Because we are His children and not slaves, God sent the “Spirit of His Son” into our hearts. No longer does God seem like a harsh taskmaster, asking of us what we can never produce. Now we call God “Father” or “Dear Father” (which is what the term Abba implies). The legalist doesn't call God “Father” because the relationship is built on law, not on love. Only when we know our relationship with God is secure can we truly call Him “Father.” That's the wonderful miracle of grace. Through the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts, we now call God “Father.” He's there whenever we need Him; we don't have to make an appointment or worry whether He will be glad to speak to us. He's our Father. Why not stop and talk to Him right now? (Names of the Holy Spirit).

### A H Leitch

Adoption...is insistent not only that there is a new quality of life, but also that this quality of life carries with it a conscious experience of the new relationship." Adoption emphasizes more exactly the experience of the father-child relationship as against the judge-prisoner relationship. It is the embracing and restoration of the prodigal son. It is not so much the analogy of the judge setting the prisoner free as it is a father restoring his son—the robe, the ring, the feast, the celebration (cf. Lk. 15:22–32). As over against sanctification, which is a valid concept suggesting the process by which a believer is made more holy, one must emphasize again that the experience of adoption continues to move along with the activity of sanctification at every level of sanctity. The emphasis in adoption is always an ethical one, and although it has been initiated and is constantly sustained through God's grace, it focuses constantly on response in the conscious experience of the believer. Glorification will be the fulfillment and completion of that which is already being experienced by the believer. (Silva, M., & Tenney, M. C. The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible)

### Dr. H. A. Ironside

"Suppose that God, while planning the church, had said, 'I am going to show My grace and the exceeding riches of My love. I shall make fallen and sinful men, derelicts, drunkards, thieves, though they may be, into as beautiful creatures as the angels are. Everyone of those men who will accept My Son will be as beautiful as the angels, even as beautiful as Michael and Gabriel, and even as glorious as Lucifer was before his fall.' This would have been wonderful, indeed, but God goes farther than that and says, **'I shall make redeemed men greater than all of the angelic hosts. I shall mark out a greater place for them than that held by the tallest angel who stands before My throne. I shall mark them out unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.'**" Brethren, we have been given the place of sonship. We have been made members of God's household, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." **Why has God, the Father,** marked us out for the adoption? Because of our worthiness or because of our good works? No, indeed, He did all of these things, as Eph 1:5 shows, "According to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace."

Paul says that Christ came and died in our place "in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." (Gal 4:5) Thanks to Christ's payment in blood we are redeemed, but we are more than just redeemed, we are family! It's one thing to be bought off the slave market (we were slaves to Sin, Satan, Law) and be set free, and we no longer have "a spirit of slavery leading to fear again" (Ro 8:15). As great as is this fearless freedom purchased by redemption, it is another thing entirely to be taken into the home of the person who freed you and be given full status as a son and inheritance as a member of the family! But such are the privileges of our adoption as sons.

### Jerry Bridges calls us to

"consider that every sin you commit is an act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of God, or, as someone has said, an act of cosmic treason. So here we sit on death row, condemned as rebels, awaiting our execution. But instead of the death we deserve, we are made sons and daughters of the very King we have rebelled against. Instead of death, we get eternal life. Instead of wrath, we receive favor. Instead of eternal ruin, we are made heirs of God and coheirs with Christ. All this happened without our doing a single thing to earn the King's favor, or any attempt on our part to make restitution for our rebellion. His Son has done it all for us." (The Gospel for Real Life)

### A W Pink

So high is the honor of being taken into the family of God, and so wondrous is the privilege of having God for our Father, that some extraordinary benefit is needed by us to assure our hearts of the same. This we have when we receive the Spirit of adoption. For God to give us His Spirit is far more than if He had given us all the world, for the latter would be something outside

Himself, whereas the former is Himself!....

In fulfillment of Christ's prayer, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them" (John 17:26) the Spirit is given to His redeemed, to signify the sameness of the Father's love unto His Son and unto His sons. Thus, the inhabitation of the Spirit in the Christian is both the surest sign of God's fatherly love and the proof of his adoption. {The Holy Spirit}

We "received" from the first Adam "the spirit of bondage"—a legalistic spirit which produced "fear"; their receiving the **Spirit of adoption** is all the more grateful: liberty being the sweeter because of the former captivity. The Law having done its work in the conscience, they can now appreciate the glad tidings of the Gospel—the revelation of the amazing love and grace of God in Jesus Christ. A spirit of love is now bred in them by the knowledge of the same. (The Holy Spirit)

**Pink** commenting on Gal 4:6 (And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!") writes that

The Holy Spirit is the Author of everything in us which goes out after God. Indeed, the Spirit of adoption births in the hearts of the sons of God a filial affection toward God and a childlike confidence in Him "Whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Even as natural children relate to a loving Father, the Spirit of adoption in us creates in us a holy reverence and honor, a confidence and trust, a love and affection and finally a submissive and obedient spirit toward God our Father.....

"This filial spirit prompts him to approach God with spiritual freedom, so that he clings to Him with the confidence of a babe, and leans upon Him with the calm repose of a little one lying on its parent's breast. It admits to the closest intimacy. Unto God as his "Father" the Christian should repair at all times, casting all his care upon Him, knowing that He cares for him (1 Pet. 5:7). It is to be manifested by an affectionate subjection (obedience) to Him "as dear children" (Eph. 5:1).

John Gill observes that the word "**Abba**" reads backwards the same as forwards, implying that God is the Father of His people in adversity as well as prosperity. The Christian's is an inalienable relationship: God is as much his "Father" when He chastens as when He delights, as much so when He frowns as when He smiles. God will never disown His own children or disinherit them as heirs....To address God as "Father" encourages faith, confirms hope, warms the heart, and draws out its affections to Him who is Love itself....

The presence of the indwelling Spirit is largely evidenced by our frequent recourse to the Father in prayer—often with sighs, sobs, and groans. The consciousness of the Spirit of adoption within us is largely regulated by the extent to which we yield ourselves unto His government. {The Holy Spirit},

**D Martyn Lloyd-Jones** commenting on John 1:12 explains that

the people who are given this power or right or authority to become sons of God are in an entirely different category from others who do not believe. These are those who believe in his name, and the adoption only happens to them, not to the others. Similarly in Ro 8:15 Paul is addressing only believers, those who are "in Christ" and who have been given the "Spirit of Christ." (Ro 8:9). Our Lord put it like this to the unbelieving Jews who had said that they were all children of God: 'If God were your Father,' He said, 'ye would love me' (John 8:42). But then He was more specific and said, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do' (v. 44). Surely that one verse alone is more than enough to demonstrate the case that not all men and women are the children of God in this special sense. Our Lord Himself draws that sharp distinction. And the apostle Paul in the epistle to the Ephesians says that we were all 'by nature the children of wrath, even as others' (Eph. 2:3). And it is only those who have been quickened with Christ who have become the children of God. {Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn},

There is a sense in which these things, as it were, happen all together—regeneration and faith and justification, and so on. The same applies to this great act of adoption, and yet, for the sake of clear thinking, we must differentiate in our minds between these things. Adoption is not the same as justification; it is not even a part of justification, but is quite separate. In justification, you remember, we found that God declares us to be righteous; it is a declaratory, a forensic act. He declares that our sins are forgiven and that He accepts the righteousness of Christ which He has put upon us. So justification is not adoption. In the same way, we must be clear that adoption and regeneration are not synonymous. **In regeneration we are given the new nature; we become partakers of the divine nature. We become new creations, new creatures.** But that is not adoption. In a sense, adoption is a combination of justification and regeneration. It is the new creature in a new relationship to God—as a child of God. Adoption is more than justification, it is more than regeneration, but it includes them both. Here is the man or woman with the new nature, declared to be just and free from the law and its condemnation, and to be positively righteous. Yes, but, in addition to all that, now declared to be a child of God. In a sense, again, it is a judicial act and another proclamation. But it proclaims something new, something different. By adoption, then, we become the children of God and are introduced into and given the privileges that

belong to members of God's family. {Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn}

## Unger

Regeneration (means) the reproduction of the filial character, and adoption the restoration of the filial privilege. Adoption is a word of position rather than relationship." Adoption is not a putting into the family by spiritual birth, but a putting into the position of sons. "The believer's relation to God as a child results from the new birth (John 1:12–13), whereas adoption is the divine act whereby one who is already a child is, through redemption from the law, placed in the position of an adult son (Gal. 4:1–5).

## J I Packer on Adoption (God Makes His People His Children)...

Paul teaches that the gift of justification (i.e., present acceptance by God as the world's Judge) brings with it the status of sonship by adoption (i.e., permanent intimacy with God as one's heavenly Father, Gal. 3:26; 4:4-7). In Paul's world, adoption was ordinarily of young adult males of good character to become heirs and maintain the family name of the childless rich. Paul, however, proclaims God's gracious adoption of persons of bad character to become "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

**Justification** is the basic blessing, on which **adoption** is founded; **adoption** is the crowning blessing, to which justification clears the way. Adopted status belongs to all who receive Christ (John 1:12). The adopted status of believers means that in and through Christ God loves them as he loves his only-begotten Son and will share with them all the glory that is Christ's now (Rom. 8:17, 38-39). Here and now, believers are under God's fatherly care and discipline (Matt. 6:26; Heb. 12:5-11) and are directed, especially by Jesus, to live their whole lives in light of the knowledge that God is their Father in heaven. They are to pray to him as such (Matt. 6:5-13), imitate him as such (Matt. 5:44-48; 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32–5:2), and trust him as such (Matt. 6:25-34), thus expressing the filial instinct that the Holy Spirit has implanted in them (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6).

**Adoption** and **regeneration** accompany each other as two aspects of the salvation that Christ brings (John 1:12-13), but they are to be distinguished. Adoption is the bestowal of a relationship, while regeneration is the transformation of our moral nature. Yet the link is evident; God wants His children, whom He loves, to bear His character, and takes action accordingly. (Concise theology: a guide to historic Christian beliefs)

## June Hunt asks

Is there a place you can call "home" and not question its permanence? A place of emotional security—a place that will last throughout eternity? Consider what your heavenly Father has said: "I have adopted you." Even though God already has a Son, He chooses to adopt you. God does not have to adopt you; He wants to! You are His child; He is your loving Father....History tells us that when the New Testament was written, it was understood an adoption could never be revoked. Do you realize what that means in light of your relationship with God? Once you are selected, you can never be rejected. You will never be emotionally abandoned. You will always have a home in God's heart. Seeing yourself through God's eyes, you are His child forever.

## Warren Wiersbe comments on sonship and adoption in Gal 4:6-7...

What we are: sons and heirs (Gal 4:6–7). Once again, the entire Trinity is involved in our spiritual experience: God the Father sent the Son to die for us, and God the Son sent His Spirit to live in us. The contrast here is not between immature children and adult sons, but between servants and sons. Like the Prodigal Son, the Galatians wanted their Father to accept them as servants, when they really were sons (Luke 15:18–19). The contrasts are easy to see. For example:

**The son has the same nature as the father, but the servant does not.** When we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us; and this means we are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). The Law could never give a person God's nature within. All it could do was reveal to the person his desperate need for God's nature. So, when the believer goes back into Law, he is denying the very divine nature within, and he is giving the old nature (the flesh) opportunity to go to work.

**The son has a father, while the servant has a master. No servant could ever say "Father" to his master.** When the sinner trusts Christ, he receives the Holy Spirit within, and the Spirit tells him that he is a child of the Father (Rom. 8:15–16). It is natural for a baby to cry, but not for a baby to talk to his father. When the Spirit enters the heart, He says, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6); and, in response, the believer cries, "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:15) The word Abba is an Aramaic word that is the equivalent of our English word "papa." This shows the closeness of the child to the Father. No servant has this.

**The son obeys out of love, while the servant obeys out of fear.** The Spirit works in the heart of the believer to quicken and increase his love for God. "The fruit of the Spirit is love" (Gal. 5:22). "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit]" (Rom. 5:5). The Judaizers told the Galatians that they would become better Christians by submitting to the Law, but the Law can never produce obedience. Only love can do that. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

**The son is rich, while the servant is poor.** We are both “sons and heirs.” And since we are adopted—placed as adult sons in the family—we may begin drawing on our inheritance right now. God has made available to us the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7; 2:7), the riches of His glory (Phil. 4:19), the riches of His goodness (Rom. 2:4), and the riches of His wisdom (Rom. 11:33ff)—and all of the riches of God are found in Christ (Col. 1:19; 2:3).

**The son has a future, while the servant does not.** While many kind masters did provide for their slaves in old age, it was not required of them. The father always provides for the son (2 Cor. 12:14).

In one sense, our adoption is not yet final, because we are awaiting the return of Christ and the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23). Some scholars think that this second stage in our adoption corresponds to the Roman practice when a man adopted someone outside his family to be his son. First there was a private ceremony at which the son was purchased; then there was a public ceremony at which the adoption was declared openly before the officials. Christians have experienced the first stage: we have been purchased by Christ and indwelt by the Spirit. We are awaiting the second stage: the public declaration at the return of Christ when “we shall be like Him” (1John 3:1–3). **We are “sons and heirs,” and the best part of our inheritance is yet to come** (1Peter 1:1–5) ([Bible Commentary NT - Warren W. Wiersbe](#))

**Easton's Bible Dictionary** has an excellent summary definition...

Adoption — the giving to any one the name and place and privileges of a son who is not a son by birth.

(1.) **Natural.** Thus Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses (Ex. 2:10), and Mordecai Esther (Esther 2:7).

(2.) **National.** God adopted Israel (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 7:6; Hos. 11:1; Ro 9:4).

(3.) **Spiritual.** An act of God's grace by which he brings men into the number of his redeemed family, and makes them partakers of all the blessings he has provided for them. Adoption represents the new relations into which the believer is introduced by justification, and the privileges connected therewith, viz., an interest in God's peculiar love (John 17:23; Rom. 5:5–8), a spiritual nature (2Pe 1:4; John 1:13), the possession of a spirit becoming children of God (1 Pet. 1:14; 2 John 4; Rom. 8:15–21; Gal. 5:1; Heb. 2:15), present protection, consolation, supplies (Luke 12:27–32; John 14:18; 1 Cor. 3:21–23; 2 Cor. 1:4), **fatherly chastisements** (Heb. 12:5–11), and a future glorious inheritance (Rom. 8:17,23; James 2:5; Phil. 3:21).

**Tyndale Bible Dictionary**...

**ADOPTION** Theologically, the act of God by which believers become members of “God's family” with all the privileges and obligations of family membership. “Sons of God,” a common kjv expression, includes individuals of both sexes numbered among God's children (Is 43:6; 2 Cor 6:18).

According to the NT, all persons are sinners by nature, and hence are called “children of wrath” (Eph 2:3, kjv); however, those upon whom God bestows his love become “children of God” by grace (1 Jn 3:1). The adoption through which this happens has its origin in God's love and its foundation in Jesus Christ who is uniquely the Son of God. Theologians regard the term “Son of God” as referring preeminently to Christ's deity (Mt 11:25–27; 16:16–17), for he is one in substance and glory with the Father. As the second person of the Trinity, Christ is distinguished from the Father as “the only begotten Son.” Believers in Christ, although “adopted,” are never seen as on a par with the uncreated, divine Son.

Nevertheless, in the beloved Son, sinners have been loved and predestined by God the Father to become his children by adoption (Eph 1:4–6). That adoption is secured by Christ the Redeemer; through his death and resurrection he destroyed sin and its death penalty, restoring the righteousness and life requisite for the status of sonship. Christ is the head of the “new covenant” as its mediator and guarantor. His brothers and sisters, as its beneficiaries, become God's heirs, and His joint heirs (Ro 8:17). God gives to them the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of his Son, as the **Spirit of adoption** (Ro 8:15; Gal 4:6). The indwelling Spirit **gives believers assurance** that they are indeed God's children and enables them to cry out to God as Father (Ro 8:15–16). **Such intimacy with the Creator and Savior in prayer is one privilege of adoption.**

Adoption was a privilege given to God's people under the “old covenant” (Ro 9:4). Both Israel as a whole and individual Israelites knew God as Father (Is 64:8–9; Hos 11:1). Since the NT regards adoption as ultimately possible only through Jesus Christ, Israel's adoption before the Incarnation was an under-age sonship comparable to the status of servanthood (Gal 4:1–7). In Jesus the privilege of mature sonship was extended to include both Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:25–29).

**James Smith**

God loves to hear us call him Father, and, act toward him as loving children. There is no relation so frequently brought before us in his word as this, nor is there any relation more fraught with comfort and consolation. What a mercy to have God for my Father, and to know that he will do a Father's part by me in all the trials, troubles, and perplexities of this mortal life. **PRAYER-** Holy and ever

blessed God, let Your love be daily shed abroad in my heart, and to you draw out and fix my love upon Yourself continually! O that I could, and did, love you with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength, every moment, and for evermore! To this end take a full, entire, and immediate possession of me, and rule in my heart, the Lord of every emotion! Sacred Spirit, teach my own spirit to trace out and prove its adoption, and then bear your witness with my spirit that I am a child of God! O scatter doubts, dissipate fears, and fill me with holy confidence! Let the knowledge of my adoption, and the enjoyment of my sonship, be my daily privilege! Oh, blessed Spirit, I praise you for the constancy and forbearance of your love! Still abide with me, reveal Jesus more clearly to me, and fill me with all joy and peace in believing on him. Blessed Comforter! let us enjoy access to God, fellowship with God, and joy in God, through your gracious influence, teaching, and work. Never, never let us rest in forms, services, or even our highest privileges; but let us be able daily to say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ." Nearer to God, nearer to God, we cry! Spirit of Jesus, seal my heart, and be yourself the seal within me that grace and glory are mine! O my soul, I charge you that you grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption; but **sow to the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and live in the Spirit.**

#### **A T Pierson**

When by faith we become united to the Lord, we are considered as sharing His eternal life, as partakers of the Divine nature, and as heirs of GOD's entire glory - past, present and future. Human illustrations do not reach to the grandeur of this theme, but we may get a glimpse of this mystery through other forms and facts. For example, when you set a scion in a mature tree, and the graft becomes thoroughly incorporated with the new stock, it becomes part of the whole tree, inseparable from it, and in a storm or time of frost or drought, all the strength that is in the tree by reason of age and growth sustains and nourishes the young and feeble graft. The graft shares not the future of that tree's life alone, but all the accumulations of its past also; it becomes identified with the whole history of that tree. When a child is adopted, or, especially, is born into a family, is made or becomes a son and heir, that child becomes also one with the whole history of the family, all its dignity, property, history, its fame and fortune, as well as its name and social standing. It is impossible to draw a line at the point where the new son enters the family, whether by birth or adoption, and separate the previous from the coming history. As far back as the family lineage is traceable, the beginnings of the accumulation of wealth, the starting point in culture and character - from that remote point whatever the family is and represents has been developing, and the new son comes into the inheritance of it all. There is a law of heredity that looks back, as well as another law of inheritance, that looks forward. The child born by the Spirit into GOD's family has not only his inheritance, but his heredity. Whatever the family of GOD means, or includes, it belongs to every child of GOD. The believer, new born, born from above, made a partaker of the divine nature, becomes also a partaker of the divine history, dignity, possessions, glory. The life before him has no end, and is immortal, but more than this, it has a new quality and character, for immortality is not necessarily a blessing. Eternal life partakes of GOD's own eternal and unchangeable perfection; it knows neither death nor decay, but is perpetually young, knowing no advance of age, which is a form of decay. Whatever there is in GOD's eternal past that is beautiful, victorious, glorious, becomes part of every believer's right and privilege and possession.

#### **W E Vine...**

Adoption (huiothesia) signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong. The word is used by the apostle Paul only. In Rom. 8:15, believers are said to have received "the Spirit of adoption," that is, the Holy Spirit who, given as the Firstfruits of all that is to be theirs, produces in them the realization of sonship and the attitude belonging to sons. In Gal. 4:5 they are said to receive "the adoption of sons," i.e., sonship bestowed in distinction from a relationship consequent merely upon birth; here two contrasts are presented, (1) between the sonship of the believer and the unoriginated sonship of Christ, (2) between the freedom enjoyed by the believer and bondage, whether of Gentile natural condition, or of Israel under the Law. In Eph. 1:5 they are said to have been foreordained unto "adoption as sons" through Jesus Christ, RV; the KJV, "adoption of children" is a mistranslation and misleading. God does not "adopt" believers as children; they are begotten as such by His Holy Spirit through faith. "Adoption" is a term involving the dignity of the relationship of believers as sons; it is not a putting into the family by spiritual birth, but a putting into the position of sons. In Rom. 8:23 the "adoption" of the believer is set forth as still future, as it there includes the redemption of the body, when the living will be changed and those who have fallen asleep will be raised. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words - online](#))

#### **Lewis Sperry Chafer...**

Though not known at first among Jews, adoption was practiced by the Egyptians. Exodus 2:10 records the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter (cf. 1 Kings 11:20). The adoption of Esther (cf. Esther 2:7, 15) demonstrates that the custom was practiced by Jews in Babylon. Greece and Rome were evidently included among those who followed this custom. The Apostle Paul, indeed, uses this term only when writing to Gentiles. He writes to such about the national placing of Israel above other peoples—"To whom pertaineth the adoption" (Rom. 9:4-5)—as an adoption, but this instance bears closely upon the spiritual, New Testament use of the word. However, it is evident from Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 31:9; and Hosea 11:1 that Israel, though called the son of Jehovah, is a son only by virtue of decree or sovereign placing and not by virtue of natural or

spiritual ties in their relation to Jehovah as a child.

**THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANING.** The spiritual use of the word adoption signifies the placing of a newborn child—in point of maturity—into the position of privilege and responsibility attached to an adult son. Here an important distinction appears between two Greek words, namely, *teknon*—used to denote little children who are under the authority of parents, tutors, and governors (cf. John 13:33)—and *huios*—used to denote an adult son....

In its distinctive significance, spiritual adoption means that the one thus placed has at once all the privilege—which is that of independence from tutors and governors—and liberty of a full-grown man. The Christian is enjoined to “stand fast” in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free and not to be “entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” which is evidently a reference to the legal or merit system (Gal. 5:1). Spiritual adoption also imposes the responsibilities belonging to full maturity....

Adoption assumes a practical meaning as set forth in the Galatian and Roman Epistles. In the former it becomes a deliverance from slavery, from guardians, and from nonage; in the latter it signifies a deliverance from the flesh (cf. Rom. 8:14–17). All of this is directly due to the new, complete responsibility which full maturity imposes and to the divine plan that the believer's life is to be lived from the start in the power of the Holy Spirit. ([Systematic Theology - Lewis Sperry Chafer](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** emphasizes that...

Adoption describes a special relationship with the Father called “adoption,” which must not be confused with adoption in the Western world. In the New Testament, adoption is the act of God whereby He gives each of His children an adult standing in the family the instant he or she is born again. You do not get into God's family by adoption but by regeneration. Why? Because an adopted child does not have the same nature as his adoptive parents. God's children have God's own nature because they have been born of God's Spirit (2 Pet. 1:4). Adoption has to do with our standing in the family. It simply means that God treats us as adults, not as babes, and gives us adult privileges. For example, a baby does not even know he is a baby, and he certainly does not know his own parents. Even if a baby did know his own father, he would not be able to speak to him. But God's children know they are God's children! They not only know who their Father is, but they are able to speak to him and call him “Abba [Papa], Father!” For the most part, children live in bondage and fear until they are old enough to care for themselves; but God's children are free from both bondage and fear. Why does God adopt his children and give them an adult standing in the family? So that they will have the freedom to draw upon all his resources and grow into mature sons and daughters. We are free to walk with him and talk with him, free to hear his Word and follow his Spirit. Even though we constantly need to grow, we do so in a family atmosphere of freedom and grace, not bondage and law. ([Be What You Are- Warren W. Wiersbe](#))

**Spurgeon**

Best of all blessings, the sonship, which places us in possession of all the treasures of heaven as joint-heirs with Christ. In the wilderness, it was the sonship of our Lord which Satan assaulted when he tempted the Savior. “If thou be the Son of God,” said he. best of all blessings, the sonship, which places us in possession of all the treasures of heaven as joint-heirs with Christ. In the wilderness, it was the sonship of our Lord which Satan assaulted when he tempted the Savior. “If thou be the Son of God,” said he....While I can say, “My God, my Father,” I have enough, though all else be gone, but if thou be no Father to me, or I have no spirit of adoption towards thee, then am I undone indeed.

**Jerry Bridges -**

We do not feel fear as when we did when we were slaves to Sin and the Law, but now have the sense in our heart of being sons of God, children of God, and as a little child readily, easily approaches a parent in expectation of either help or comfort, we have this feeling toward our Heavenly Father, our Abba, our Dearest Father. Indeed, is this not one of the sweetest experiences of the Christian life!

Adoption is a legal term for we are not naturally children of God, and He is not the Father of every individual. Only those who are adopted can call God Abba, Father. Adoption is the legal process by which one who is not naturally a member of the family becomes legally a son with all the rights and blessings of natural sonship, including that of becoming an heir.

Adoption is that act by which God makes a sinner His son. It is the outward expression of the inward act of conversion and regeneration. It is the climax of God's saving act, for in it we see the purpose of all God's saving effort. It is to bring man into fellowship with Himself.

Think of that! If you have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior, you are a child of God, a son or daughter of the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the universe. I grant that oftentimes our circumstances, or even our behavior, can obscure the fact that we are children of God, but it is important that we keep this truth constantly before us ([The Gospel for Real Life- Turn to the Liberating Power of the Cross...Every Day - Includes Study Guide- Jerry Bridges](#))

## Horatius Bonar

But when GOD comes near to us in human flesh (Immanuel), when GOD approaches me in the person of a man like myself, when I hear GOD speaking to me through human lips, looking kindly upon me through human eyes, dropping over my wretchedness human tears, and heaving over me human groans, as he speaks to me of love; of pardon, and of adoption into his family of love; the guilty dread of GOD flees away, and perfect love that casts out all fear, takes its place.

Wayne Detzler writes that...

Adoption in the Greek and Roman world was a beautiful picture. His contemporary culture gave the Apostle Paul this word, but he gave the word a new, Holy Spirit-inspired meaning. **No concept is more meaningful to a believer....**

Throughout the Greek world the wealthy and influential practiced adoption. Sometimes just a simple declaration in the marketplace turned a slave into a son. It was an ancient remedy used when a marriage failed to produce a male heir. No change in name came, but the adopted son immediately became heir to the entire wealth and position of his adoptive family. Conversely the adopted son also assumed responsibility for the parents in their time of need.

For adoption deposits everything that God owns to the accounts of His sons and daughters. Adoption is all about position and privilege... **Walking down the dusty streets of Nazareth one summer afternoon I was almost run over by a racing boy. As he charged past me the little lad caught sight of his father. In a shrill, childish voice he screamed: "Abba, Abba." Then I began to understand the intimacy of relationship which God sustains to us. What wonderful, God-ordained words to use in prayer: "Abba, Father."** ([Detzler, Wayne E: New Testament Words in Today's Language. Victor. 1986](#))

A tent or a cottage, why should I care?  
They're building a palace for me over There;  
Though exiled from Home, yet still I may sing:  
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.

—H. E. Buell

## ADOPTION QUOTES

The Christian is far more than a guest with God. -- Donald Grey Barnhouse

We are forced to admit that many who are brothers in Christ do not act like brothers. -- Donald Grey Barnhouse

We were rebels on death row, but Christ redeemed us, God gave us new life, pardoned us, He adopted us and brought us into His royal family. -- Jerry Bridges

Only if we walk in the beauty of God's law do we become sure of our adoption as children of the Father. -- John Calvin

We can only begin an upright course of life when God, of his good pleasure, adopts us into his family. -- John Calvin

Adoption gives us the privilege of sons, regeneration the nature of sons. -- Stephen Charnock

To take a hopeless sinner and elevate him to become a hopeful son requires a miracle, a miracle which the Apostle Paul calls adoption. -- Wayne Detzler

God settled the aim of our adoption before He made a world for us to live in (Eph. 1:4-5). What a comfort that is! Before God raised up the Rockies He raised up sons and daughters, and they had future believers' names on them. -- Wayne Detzler

Now are we the sons of God, but it does not yet appear; the honor is clouded; but then God will publicly own all His children. The deed of adoption which is now written, signed, and sealed, will then be recognized, claimed, and published" -- John Evans on Ro 8:23 in Matthew Henry's Commentary

Understanding adoption should mean that our own sense of the great goodness and love of God is immeasurably enriched. -- Sinclair Ferguson

What Paul is saying (Gal 8:15, Gal 4:6) is that even in the darkest hour there is a co-operative and affirmative testimony given by the Spirit. It is found in the very fact that, although we may be broken and bruised, tossed about with fears and doubts, the child of God nevertheless in his need cries out, 'Dear Father! Father!' as instinctively as a child who has fallen and been hurt calls out in similar language, 'Daddy, help me!' Assurance of sonship is not reserved for the highly sanctified Christian; it is the birthright of even the weakest and most oppressed believer. This is its glory. -- Sinclair Ferguson

The least degree of sincere sanctification...is a certain sign of adoption, a sure argument to [the Christian] that he has it, that he is the adopted child of God. -- Thomas Gataker

I am a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth, but I am not an orphan. --Vance Havner

Adoption, as the term clearly implies, is an act of transfer from an alien family into the family of God himself. This is surely the apex of grace and privilege. --John Murray

The spirit of prayer is the fruit and token of the Spirit of adoption. --John Newton

Adoption... is the highest privilege that the gospel offers: higher even than justification. --J. I. Packer

The word adoption has to do with placing one in a position of privilege and responsibility. -- Dwight Pentecost

We were not cute little orphans that God was attracted to; we enemies in rebellion against God. (Ro 5:6, 5:10). - John Piper

We are not second-class sons, relegated to the back row when family treasures are divided. - Ray Pritchard

We receive the nature of the sons of God by regeneration — a work within us. Then we receive the Spirit of adoption, a favor conferred upon us. - James Smith

The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption . . .

reveals God's paternal character,

sheds abroad his love in our hearts,

gives us soul-captivating views of him in the person of Jesus,

then secretly and sweetly whispers, "Abba, Abba!"

and almost before we are aware of it — we look up and call God, Father! - James Smith

Adoption gives us the rights of children (Gal 4:4-7), regeneration (new birth) gives us the nature of children." (Jn 1:12). -- C H Spurgeon

We are like children in an orphanage, waiting with bags packed and completed adoption papers in hand for the coming of our Father...whom we can (reverently) call "Daddy" (8:15). - Swindoll, Charles R.

He that escapes affliction may well suspect his adoption. -- John Trapp

That we who have forfeited and lost our place and privileges as children of God may be fully reinstated therein was one of the great teachings of Jesus Christ. For that the parable of the prodigal son was spoken. -- Merrill Unger

Adoption is a greater mercy than Adam had in paradise. --Thomas Watson

God's decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saints' perseverance depends. That decree ties the knot of adoption so fast, that neither sin, death, nor hell, can break it asunder. -- Thomas Watson

God has made his children, by adoption, nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are the friends of Christ; believers are his members. --Thomas Watson

Since God has a Son of his own, and such a Son, how wonderful God's love in adopting us! We needed a Father, but he did not need sons. --Thomas Watson

A man adopts one for his son and heir that does not at all resemble him; but whosoever God adopts for His child is like Him; he not only bears his Heavenly Father's name, but His image. -- Thomas Watson

How does the Spirit witness within the heart of a believer? (Ro 8:16) "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!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Ro 8:15–16, NASB). His witness is our inner confidence that we belong to Christ—not a confidence that we "work up" for ourselves, but a confidence that God gives us. The Spirit also witnesses to us through the Word. As we read God's Word, He speaks to us and teaches us. This is not true of an unsaved man (1 Cor. 2:14); it is true only of a believer. A Christian feels "at home" with God's people because the Spirit dwells in him. This is another way the Spirit bears witness. -- Warren Wiersbe

We are joint-heirs with Christ, so that He cannot receive His inheritance in glory until we are there to share it with Him. -- Warren Wiersbe

No matter what your status among men, your status in God's family is one of "equal rights and privileges."

Yes, we honor God's great Name when we call Him our Father, but even more so when we live like His adopted sons and daughters! (Eph 4:1-3, 5:1, 2, Php 1:27, Col 1:10, 1Th 2:12)

He possesses all who knows the Creator of all.

Those who receive Jesus and believe in His name inherit this birthright (John 1:12), not by natural birth, but through spiritual rebirth.

No man is poor who is heir to all the riches of God!

Christ's Sonship is inherent, while ours is conferred.

(**NOTE:** Many [but not all] of the preceding quotes are from a resource I highly recommend as one of the best sources of "bibliocentric" quotes available = [The Complete Gathered Gold- A Treasury of Quotations for Christians - John Blanchard](#))

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**Illustration** - David W. Folsom, author of the book Assets Unknown, estimates that there are over one trillion dollars worth of unclaimed property in the United States held in federal and state accounts, waiting to be claimed by the rightful owners. These assets include stocks and bonds, unclaimed pension and insurance benefits, and uncashed dividend checks. This staggering figure illustrates the "high cost of forgetting what you own." As Christians we are "co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17); we can't afford to lose sight of what God is holding in store for us. Forgetting spiritually costs more than forgetting financially.

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**Jerry Bridges** calls us to

consider that every sin you commit is an act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of God, an act of cosmic treason. So here we sit on death row, condemned as rebels, awaiting our execution. But instead of the death we deserve, we are made sons and daughters of the very King we have rebelled against. Instead of death, we get eternal life. Instead of wrath, we receive favor. Instead of eternal ruin, we are made heirs of God and coheirs with Christ. All this happened without our doing a single thing to earn the King's favor, or any attempt on our part to make restitution for our rebellion. His Son has done it all for us." (The Gospel for Real Life)

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**Warren Wiersbe** writes that

**Adoption** is not the way you get into God's family; adoption is the way you enjoy God's family. **Adoption** is the act of God by which He gives each of His children an adult standing in His family. The instant you were saved you received an adult standing, which means you have all the adult privileges. You also have adult responsibilities. This means that you and I cannot use the length of time we have been saved as an excuse for being poor Christians. Someone may say, "Well, I have only been saved for four or five years; you can't expect too much of me." God says, "No, I expect of you what I expect of every one of My children. I am going to give you adult privileges, and I expect from you adult conduct and the fulfillment of adult responsibilities." That is what adoption is. Adoption means that the instant you were born into His family, God gave you an adult standing. (Key Words of the Christian Life)

In Romans 8:14-17 Paul lists the privileges of adoption - (1) Ability to walk, being willingly led by the Spirit. Not that you cannot lead a baby, because a baby cannot walk. But since our adoption conveys adult standing, we are instantly able to walk in obedience because we have the Spirit leading us. (cf Ro 6:4, Ro 8:4). (2) We have freedom, in contrast to the bondage that the law brings. In Gal 4:1-7 Paul highlights the contrast between a slave and a son. And note that the word for son means a mature son. A child is under rules (Don't do this, etc) and sadly many sons of God still live under such legalistic bondage. Adopted sons experience freedom from the law - not that we are lawless, but now relating to God out of love and not bondage. (3) We can boldly approach God and cry "Abba! Father!" (4) Assurance we are God's adopted children (R 8:16). (5) We are now heirs and joint heirs with Christ. That means everything we inherit comes through Christ. There are two names on the check: Our Lord Jesus signs the check, and we have to sign the check. This is what prayer is all about. This is why we come "in the name of Jesus," because apart from Him we can inherit nothing. You and I were born rich in Jesus Christ. We have the riches of His grace, the riches of His wisdom, and the riches of His mercy. We can draw upon all of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (6) we have the privilege of suffering. Romans 8:17 "The ultimate privilege of life is to be entrusted with God's glory. God puts us through suffering that He might be able to share His glory with us. That is an amazing thing!"

Are you living up to (or squandering) your privileges? If you are a Christian, you have been adopted, you have an adult standing in the family of God. With this standing comes responsibility. We don't run away from suffering. We don't waste our inheritance. We are sure that we are born again, and we share this with others. We have the privilege of speaking to and for God and the freedom of walking with God. What privileges we have! ([Key Words of the Christian Life- Understanding and Applying Their Meanings- Warren W. Wiersbe](#))

I once was an outcast stranger on earth,  
A sinner by choice and an alien by birth;  
But I've been adopted, my name's written down—  
An heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown.  
—Buell

In another section **Wiersbe** addresses this question...

**How do we enjoy adoption** - by believing that it is true. Adoption is not a feeling; it is a fact. Just believe that it is true. Look at yourself in the mirror and say, "You are being treated as an adult, not as a little baby." God does not pamper His children. He will have no pampered children at all, because pampered children cannot be used for His glory. So just believe it and say, "Thank God I have been adopted; I have an adult standing before God. All these privileges are mine."

Second, yield to the Holy Spirit, for He is the Spirit of adoption. He is the one who will make all of this real to you. In Romans 8:2, He is called the Spirit of life. In Romans 8:13, we see He is the Spirit of death—He puts to death the deeds of the body. Yield to the Holy Spirit and claim God's promise by faith. The blessing is there; it is true, and it is real. Start treating yourself the way God treats you. ([Ibid](#))

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** explains that the "**Fatherhood**" of God applies not to every created human being but only a select group...

Such people believe in what they call the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of all men and they claim that the Scriptures which support their contention are the following: first of all, a statement in Acts 17:25–29, where the apostle Paul, speaking in Athens, uses the phrase, 'For we are also his offspring.' Now that is a very important statement. Paul is telling the Athenians about this God whom they ignorantly worship—they called him 'the unknown god' (Read Acts 17:25–29) The second Scripture which these people quote is Hebrews 12:9 where the writer is exhorting us to be obedient and not to grumble at the chastisement of God. He says that we have all subjected ourselves to our earthly parents, and then he argues, 'Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits [which means the father of all spirits] and live?' And again, in James 1:17, we find a reference to God as 'the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow or turning.' So what do we say to this contention that God is the Father of all men and that all men and women are therefore the children of God? Our first answer is that these very scriptures clearly refer to the relationship of God to all people in creation and in providence only. They are very similar to 1 Timothy 4:10 where we are told that God is 'the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.' It is the same kind of distinction. God is the creator of all humanity. In that sense He is the Father of the spirits of all people, but it has nothing to do with redemption and with the special relationship of God to men and women in terms of adopting them as children. (**God the Holy Spirit**)

**J I Packer** on **Adoption** (God Makes His People His Children)...

Paul teaches that the gift of justification (i.e., present acceptance by God as the world's Judge) brings with it the status of sonship by adoption (i.e., permanent intimacy with God as one's heavenly Father, Gal. 3:26; 4:4-7). In Paul's world, adoption was

ordinarily of young adult males of good character to become heirs and maintain the family name of the childless rich. Paul, however, proclaims God's gracious adoption of persons of bad character to become "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

**Justification** is the basic blessing, on which **adoption** is founded; **adoption** is the crowning blessing, to which justification clears the way. Adopted status belongs to all who receive Christ (John 1:12). The adopted status of believers means that in and through Christ God loves them as he loves his only-begotten Son and will share with them all the glory that is Christ's now (Rom. 8:17, 38-39). Here and now, believers are under God's fatherly care and discipline (Matt. 6:26; Heb. 12:5-11) and are directed, especially by Jesus, to live their whole lives in light of the knowledge that God is their Father in heaven. They are to pray to him as such (Matt. 6:5-13), imitate him as such (Matt. 5:44-48; 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32-5:2), and trust him as such (Matt. 6:25-34), thus expressing the filial instinct that the Holy Spirit has implanted in them (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6).

**Adoption** and **regeneration** accompany each other as two aspects of the salvation that Christ brings (John 1:12-13), but they are to be distinguished. Adoption is the bestowal of a relationship, while regeneration is the transformation of our moral nature. Yet the link is evident; God wants His children, whom He loves, to bear His character, and takes action accordingly. (Concise theology: a guide to historic Christian beliefs)

Why do we live like paupers,  
When riches we possess?  
We have become joint heirs with Christ,  
With blessings measureless  
-Sper

**S E Pierce** writes that the...

The Spirit of adoption is the Spirit of God, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and who is sent by Them to shed abroad the love of God in the heart, to give a real enjoyment of it, and to fill the soul with joy and peace in believing. He comes to testify of Christ; and by taking of the things which are His, and showing them to His people, He draws their heart to Him; and by opening unto them the freeness and fullness of Divine grace, and the exceeding great and precious promises which God has given unto His people, He leads them to know their interest in Christ; and helps them in His name, blood, and righteousness, to approach their heavenly Father with holy delight.

**R A Torrey** on Ro 8:15 and Gal 4:6...

The natural attitude of our hearts towards God is not that of sons. We may call Him Father with our lips, as when for example we repeat in a formal way, the prayer that Jesus taught us, "Our Father, which art in heaven," but there is no real sense that He is our Father. Our calling Him so is mere words. We do not really trust Him. We do not love to come into His presence; we do not love to look up into His face with a sense of wonderful joy and trust because we are talking to our Father. We dread God. We come to Him in prayer because we think we ought to and perhaps we are afraid of what might happen if we did not. But when the Spirit of His Son bears witness together with our spirit to our sonship, then we are filled and thrilled with the sense that we are sons. We trust Him as we never even trusted our earthly Father. There is even less fear of Him than there was of our earthly father. Reverence there is, awe, but oh! such a sense of wonderful childlike trust.

God, our Father, longs that we shall know and realize that we are His sons. He longs to hear us call Him Father from hearts that realize what they say, and that trust Him without a fear or anxiety. He is our Father, He alone in all the universe realizes the fullness of meaning that there is in that wonderful word "Father," and it brings joy to Him to have us realize that He is our Father and to call Him so.

**(Illustration of Sons and Daughters Who can now cry Abba! Father!)** Some years ago there was a father in the state of Illinois, who had a child who had been deaf and dumb from her birth. It was a sad day in that home when they came to realize that that little child was deaf and would never hear and, as they thought, would never speak. The father heard of an institution in Jacksonville, Ill., where deaf children were taught to talk. He took this little child to the institution and put her in charge of the superintendent. After the child had been there some time, the superintendent wrote telling the father that he would better come and visit his child. A day was appointed and the child was told that her father was coming. As the hour approached, she sat up in the window, watching the gate for her father to pass through. The moment he entered the gate she saw him, ran down the stairs and ran out on the lawn, met him, looked up into his face and lifted up her hands and said, "Papa." When that father heard the dumb lips of his child speak for the first time and frame that sweet word "Papa," such a throb of joy passed through his heart that he literally fell to the ground and rolled upon the grass in ecstasy. But there is a Father who loves as no earthly father, who longs to have His children realize that they are children, and when we look up into His face and from a heart which the Holy Spirit has filled with a sense of sonship call Him "Abba" (papa), "Father," no language can describe the joy of God. (The person and work of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Scriptures and

in personal experience)

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Writing to a new generation after World War I, **Winston Churchill** challenged,

You have not an hour to lose....Don't be content with things as they are. 'The earth is yours and the fullness thereof.' Enter your inheritance; accept your responsibility."

Oh, that believers would enter their inheritance and accept their responsibility as sons and daughters of God!

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**Love Without Coercion** - My wife and I waited 15 years for a child that never came by the natural way. However we were approached one day with a lead of a newborn not yet born. I remember standing in front of the judge on our day of adoption. He pointed his finger and asked of me, "Is anyone coercing you to adopt this little boy?" After we had assured him that we were doing so out of love for our sin, he made this statement. "From today on, he is your son. He may disappoint you, even grieve you but he is your son. Everything you own one day will be his and he will bear your name." Then he looked to the clerk and gave this command. "So order a change in this child's birth certificate and may it reflect that these are the parents of this child." It was then that I realized that my Heavenly Father loved me so much that, without coercion, He loved me and gave His all to me. On that day, He changed my name and I gladly bear His name and His image. -- Gerald Penix

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### **A Child of the King**

My Father is rich in houses and lands  
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!  
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,  
His coffers are full, He has riches untold.

My Father's own Son, the Saviour of men,  
Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them;  
But now He is reigning forever on high,  
And will give me a home in heaven by and by.

I once was an outcast, stranger on earth,  
A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth;  
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,  
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown.

I'm a child of the King, a child of the King;  
With Jesus my Saviour, I'm a child of the King.

-Harriet E. Buell

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**SCARRED HANDS** - William Dixon was a widower who had also lost his only son. One day he saw a neighbor's house on fire; although the aged owner was rescued, her grandson was trapped upstairs in the blaze. Dixon didn't hesitate. Climbing an iron pipe on the side of the house, Dixon lowered the boy to safety, badly burning his own hands on the overheated pipe. Shortly after the fire, the boy's grandmother died, leaving him alone. As the town council considered what to do, two men appeared requesting custody of the boy. One was a father who had lost his son and wanted to adopt the orphan as his own. The other was Dixon. The first man gave his reasons for wanting to adopt the boy, then Dixon stood before the council and simply held up his badly scarred hands. When the vote was taken, the boy went to him. - **Beloved, we are decreed as adopted sons of God because of the scars on the hands of the Son of God! Hallelujah!**

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**REAL WEALTH** - If children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Ro 8:17

Milton Petrie is a modern millionaire and a generous one at that. According to a New York Times article, Mr. Petrie, once worth more than a billion dollars, reads the New York papers "for stories of people life has kicked in the face. He then reaches for his checkbook." The wealthy benefactor often requires anonymity as a condition for his generosity. But sometimes he tells enough to make his unusual story interesting. For instance, the Times article ended with what he had said about his chauffeur. "This guy's in

my will for \$1 million and he doesn't know it." Then the article concluded, "Surprise!" We may feel a bit envious of this chauffeur, who probably discovered his good fortune after reading Petrie's comment in the New York Times article. But when we are born again, we come into enormous spiritual wealth. Read Ephesians 1 (Eph 1:4 of our spiritual adoption). Think of what it means to be named an heir of Christ!—M. R. D. II

**IF YOU HAVE CHRIST,  
YOU ARE TRULY WEALTHY.**

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**CHILDREN OF THE KING** (Read Galatians 3:19-29) Hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom . . . ? Jas 2: 5

At prayer meeting last night during "testimony time," one of the ladies related an experience she had in a supermarket. She noticed that the woman at the cash register seemed excited and elated. When she arrived at her station, this clerk blurted out, "Wouldn't you like to touch me? I just shook hands with a movie star!" Mentioning his name she continued, "He passed through this very line a few minutes ago. Wouldn't you like to touch my hand?" "No, thank you," the other replied, "but wouldn't you like to touch me? I'm better than a movie star. I'm a child of the King!" She went on to explain that she was one of the **"heirs of the kingdom of God"** through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The world doesn't pay much attention to Christians (cf 1Jn 3:1b). In fact, those who really believe the Bible and talk about being "born-again" are often snubbed. Yet, our relationship with God through Christ sets us apart from all others (Jn 1:12). By faith in Him, we have been born into the family of God (Gal 3:26). We are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Ro 8:17). Heaven is our real home. We are just passing through this world while our mansions are being prepared for our eternal habitation (Jn 14:3). "The cattle upon a thousand hills" belong to our Father. United to Him, the Ruler of the universe, we become true royalty.

When things look dark and the world mistreats you, take heart, believer. The day is coming when your true identity will be revealed at the "revealing of the sons of God" (Ro 8:19). We may not amount to much in the eyes of men, but God views us as His dear children and "heirs of the Kingdom"!

A tent or a cottage, why should I care?  
They're building a palace for me over There;  
Though exiled from Home, yet still I may sing:  
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.

—H. E. Buell

**No man is poor who is heir to all the riches of God!**

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**More to Follow** - A benevolent person gave Mr. Rowland Hill a hundred pounds to dispense to a poor minister, and thinking it was too much to send him at once, Mr. Hill forwarded five pounds in a letter, with simply these words within the envelope: "More to follow." In a few days' time, the good man received another letter by the post—and letters by the post were rarities in those days; this second messenger contained another five pounds, with the same motto: "And more to follow." A day or two after came a third and a fourth, and still the same promise: "And more to follow." Till the whole sum had been received the astonished minister was made familiar with the cheering words: "And more to follow." —C. H. Spurgeon

Every blessing that comes from God is sent with the self-same message: "And more to follow." "I forgive you your sins, but there's more to follow." "I justify you in the righteousness of Christ, but there's more to follow." **"I adopt you into my family, but there's more to follow."** "I educate you for Heaven, but there's more to follow." "I give you grace upon grace, but there's more to follow." "I have helped you even to old age, but there's still more to follow." "I will uphold you in the hour of death, and as you are passing into the world of spirits, my mercy shall still continue with you, and when you land in the world to come there shall still be 'More to follow.'"—C. H. Spurgeon

We are waiting for the day when we will put on our proper garments and be manifested as the children of God. You are young princes, and you have not yet been crowned. You are young brides, and the marriage day has not yet come. And because of the love your fiancé shows you, you long and sigh for the marriage day. Your very happiness makes you groan; your joy, like a swollen spring, longs to leap up like some Iceland geyser, climbing to the skies. Your joy heaves and groans deep within your spirit because it does not have enough room to express itself to others. —C. H. Spurgeon

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“Waiting for the adoption.”

— Romans 8:23

Even in this world saints are **God’s children**, but men cannot discover them to be so, except by certain moral characteristics (1Jn 3:1). The adoption is not manifested, the children are not yet openly declared. Among the Romans a man might adopt a child, and keep it private for a long time: but there was a second adoption in public; when the child was brought before the constituted authorities its former garments were taken off, and the father who took it to be his child gave it raiment suitable to its new condition of life. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” We are not yet arrayed in the apparel which befits the royal family of heaven; we are wearing in this flesh and blood just what we wore as the sons of Adam; but we know that “when he shall appear” who is the “first-born among many brethren,” we shall be like him, we shall see him as he is. Cannot you imagine that a child taken from the lowest ranks of society, and adopted by a Roman senator, would say to himself, “I long for the day when I shall be publicly adopted. Then I shall leave off these plebeian garments, and be robed as becomes my senatorial rank”? Happy in what he has received, for that very reason he groans to get the fulness of what is promised him. So it is with us today. We are waiting till we shall put on our proper garments, and shall be manifested as the children of God. We are young nobles, and have not yet worn our coronets. We are young brides, and the marriage day is not yet come, and by the love our Spouse bears us, we are led to long and sigh for the bridal morning. Our very happiness makes us groan after more; our joy, like a swollen spring, longs to well up like an Iceland geyser, leaping to the skies, and it heaves and groans within our spirit for want of space and room by which to manifest itself to men.

“After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven, etc.”

— Matthew 6:9

This prayer begins where all true prayer must commence, with the spirit of **adoption**, “Our Father.” There is no acceptable prayer until we can say, “I will arise, and go unto my Father.” This child-like spirit soon perceives the grandeur of the Father “in heaven,” and ascends to devout adoration, “Hallowed be thy name.” The child lisping, “Abba, Father,” grows into the cherub crying, “Holy, Holy, Holy.” There is but a step from rapturous worship to the glowing missionary spirit, which is a sure outgrowth of filial love and reverent adoration—“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Next follows the heartfelt expression of dependence upon God—“Give us this day our daily bread.” Being further illuminated by the Spirit, he discovers that he is not only dependent, but sinful, hence he entreats for mercy, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors:” and being pardoned, having the righteousness of Christ imputed, and knowing his acceptance with God, he humbly supplicates for holy perseverance, “Lead us not into temptation.” The man who is really forgiven, is anxious not to offend again; the possession of justification leads to an anxious desire for sanctification. “Forgive us our debts,” that is justification; “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” that is sanctification in its negative and positive forms. As the result of all this, there follows a triumphant ascription of praise, “Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.” We rejoice that our King reigns in providence and shall reign in grace, from the river even to the ends of the earth, and of his dominion there shall be no end. Thus from a sense of **adoption**, up to fellowship with our reigning Lord, this short model of prayer conducts the soul. Lord, teach us thus to pray.

“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

— Galatians 3:26

The fatherhood of God is common to all his children. Ah! Little-faith, you have often said, “Oh that I had the courage of Great-heart, that I could wield his sword and be as valiant as he! But, alas, I stumble at every straw, and a shadow makes me afraid.” List thee, Little-faith. Great-heart is God’s child, and you are God’s child too; and Great-heart is not one whit more God’s child than you are. Peter and Paul, the highly-favored apostles, were of the family of the Most High; and so are you also; the weak Christian is as much a child of God as the strong one.

This cov’nant stands secure,  
Though earth’s old pillars bow;  
The strong, the feeble, and the weak,  
Are one in Jesus now.

All the names are in the same family register. One may have more grace than another, but God our heavenly Father has the same tender heart towards all. One may do more mighty works, and may bring more glory to his Father, but he whose name is the least in the kingdom of heaven is as much the child of God as he who stands among the King’s mighty men. Let this cheer and comfort us, when we draw near to God and say, “Our Father.”

Yet, while we are comforted by knowing this, let us not rest contented with weak faith, but ask, like the Apostles, to have it increased.

However feeble our faith may be, if it be real faith in Christ, we shall reach heaven at last, but we shall not honour our Master much on our pilgrimage, neither shall we abound in joy and peace. **If then you would live to Christ's glory, and be happy in his service, seek to be filled with the spirit of adoption more and more completely, till perfect love shall cast out fear.** (cf 1Jn 4:18)

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,  
that we should be called the sons of God:  
therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.  
Beloved, now are we the sons of God.”  
— 1 John 3:1,2

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.” Consider who we were, and what we feel ourselves to be even now when corruption is powerful in us, and you will wonder at our **adoption**. Yet we are called **“the sons of God.”** What a high relationship is that of a son, and what privileges it brings! What care and tenderness the son expects from his father, and what love the father feels towards the son! But all that, and more than that, we now have through Christ. As for the temporary drawback of suffering with the elder brother, this we accept as an honour: “Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” We are content to be unknown with him in his humiliation, for we are to be exalted with him. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” That is easy to read, but it is not so easy to feel. How is it with your heart this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow? Does corruption rise within your spirit, and grace seem like a poor spark trampled under foot? Does your faith almost fail you? Fear not, it is neither your graces nor feelings on which you are to live: you must live simply by faith on Christ. With all these things against us, now—in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may be—now, as much in the valley as on the mountain, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” “Ah, but,” you say, “see how I am arrayed! my graces are not bright; my righteousness does not shine with apparent glory.” But read the next: “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” The Holy Spirit shall purify our minds, and divine power shall refine our bodies, then shall we see him as he is.

“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”  
— Acts 8:37

These words may answer your scruples, devout reader, concerning the ordinances. Perhaps you say, “I should be afraid to be baptized; it is such a solemn thing to avow myself to be dead with Christ, and buried with him. I should not feel at liberty to come to the Master's table; I should be afraid of eating and drinking damnation unto myself, not discerning the Lord's body.” Ah! poor trembler, Jesus has given you liberty, be not afraid. If a stranger came to your house, he would stand at the door, or wait in the hall; he would not dream of intruding unbidden into your parlour—he is not at home: but your child makes himself very free about the house; and so is it with the **child of God**. A stranger may not intrude where a child may venture. When the Holy Ghost has given you to feel the spirit of adoption, you may come to Christian ordinances without fear (Ro 8:15, 16, Gal 4:5-7). The same rule holds good of the Christian's inward privileges. You think, poor seeker, that you are not allowed to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; if you are permitted to get inside Christ's door, or sit at the bottom of his table, you will be well content. Ah! but you shall not have less privileges than the very greatest. God makes no difference in his love to his children. A child is a child to him; he will not make him a hired servant; but he shall feast upon the fatted calf, and shall have the music and the dancing as much as if he had never gone astray. When Jesus comes into the heart, he issues a general license to be glad in the Lord. No chains are worn in the court of King Jesus. Our admission into full privileges may be gradual, but it is sure. Perhaps our reader is saying, “I wish I could enjoy the promises, and walk at liberty in my Lord's commands.” “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Loose the chains of thy neck, O captive daughter, for Jesus makes thee free.

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Jesus' prayer in the Garden (Mt 26:39, Mk 14:36) was a filial prayer - It was filial prayer. “Abba, Father.” You will find it a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. You have no rights as a subject, you have forfeited them by your treason; but nothing can forfeit a child's right to a father's protection. Be not afraid to say, “My Father, hear my cry.”

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The best way to reconcile two disagreeing families is to make some marriage between them: even so, the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us in the world that He might hereby make our peace, reconciling God to man and man to God. By this happy match the Son of God is become the Son of Man, even flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones; and the sons of men are made the sons of God. - John Boys

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God has made His children, by adoption, nearer to Himself than the angels. The angels are the friends of Christ; believers are His members. - Thomas Watson

A man adopts one for his son and heir that does not at all resemble him, but whosoever God adopts for His child is like Him; he not only bears His heavenly Father's name, but His image. Col. 3:10. - Thomas Watson

God's decree (regarding the saints' eternal security) is the very pillar and basis on which the saints' perseverance depends. That decree ties the knot of adoption so fast, that neither sin, death, nor hell, can break it asunder. - Thomas Watson

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**LIVING ROYALLY** - You are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Galatians 4:7

There is an ancient story about a man named Astyages who determined to do away with a royal infant by the name of Cyrus. He summoned an officer of his court and told him to kill the baby prince. The officer in turn delivered the youngster to a herdsman with instructions that he should take him high up into the mountains where the baby would die from exposure. The herdsman and his wife, however, took the child and raised him as their own. Growing up in the home of those humble peasants, he naturally thought they were his real parents. He was ignorant of his royal birth and his kingly estate. Because he thought he was a peasant, he lived like one.

Many Christians fail to realize all that is theirs in Christ. They live as spiritual peasants when they should be living royally. According to the apostle Paul, believers "are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). He also said, "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:6-7). God has given us everything we need to live victorious, fulfilling lives. Let's not live like peasants. -Richard W. De Haan

God has given all we need  
For life and godliness,  
But we still have to put to use  
The gifts that we possess.  
-Sper

**A child of the king shouldn't live like a slave of the world.**

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**Spurgeon...**

Oh," said a worldling to me when I was in great pain and weakness of body, "is this the way God treats His children? Then I am glad I am not one."

How my heart burned within me, and my eyes flashed, as I said that I would take an eternity of such pain as I endured sooner than stand in the place of the man who preferred ease to God. I felt it would be hell to me to have a doubt of my **adoption**, and whatever pain I might suffer was a trifle so long as I knew that the Lord was my God.

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Who is to have authority in the matter of gracious adoption? The children of wrath? Surely not; and yet all men are such! No, it stands to reason, to common sense, that none but the parent can have the discretion to adopt.

**Philip Graham Ryken** tells the following story regarding adoption...

In one of his audiotapes Garrison Keillor tells the story of a hard-luck family from Lake Wobegon, Minnesota. In the story a nice, young Swedish woman runs off with a Scotsman, a stranger by the name of Campbell. They have three children together, but eventually the man leaves the woman, and she has to go back home in disgrace. She and her three children live in an old broken-down trailer, dependent on the charity of family and the pity of friends. Yet they always dream of a better life. Then one day they get a letter asking for information about their family heritage, their connection to the Campbells. Soon someone writes again to inform them that they are direct lineal descendants of the House of Stuart, the ancient and royal family of Scotland, and that therefore they are **rightful heirs to the throne**. The letter closes with these words to the firstborn son:

Your Royal Highness,

Discovering you and your family has been the happiest accomplishment of my life. And if God, in His infinite wisdom, should deny me the opportunity to meet you face to face on this earth, I should still count myself the luckiest of men for this chance—however small—to restore Scotland to her former greatness. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers every day, and that I will

work with every ounce of my being to restore you from your sad exile to the lands, the goods and the reverence to which you, by the will of God are entitled.

It must be wonderful to belong to royalty. We should know because we too have received a message from a far place, assuring us that by virtue of our redemption in Christ, we belong to the royal house of God (Eph 1:5, Ro 8:15-17, 23, Gal 4:4-5). Jesus has a plan to elevate us all to greatness. We are in His thoughts and prayers every day, and He is working with every ounce of His being to restore us from our sad exile to the glory to which we are entitled by the grace of God. (Exodus: saved for God's glory)

I would not change places with the wealthiest and  
most influential person in the world.  
I would rather be a child of the King, a joint-heir with Christ,  
a member of the Royal Family of heaven!  
-Billy Graham

**June Hunt** in her devotional "[Seeing Yourself Through God's Eyes- A 31-Day Devotional Guide](#)" made the truth of **adoption** her first entry in this 31 day study...

**I Am Adopted by God** - "He predestined us to be adopted" (Eph 1:5). Oh, to be secure! Everyone wants it; everyone longs for it. Why? Perhaps security has added significance to us because we all know the feeling of having the proverbial "rug pulled out from under us" by someone we trusted. At one time we felt at home in the relationship, but rejection sent us out the door and into the pit of abandonment.

Is there a place you can call "home" and not question its permanence? A place of emotional security—a place that will last throughout eternity? Consider what your heavenly Father has said: "I have adopted you."

Even though God already has a Son, He chooses to adopt you. God does not have to adopt you; He wants to! You are His child; He is your loving Father.

Thomas Watson expressed it this way: "Since God has a Son of His own, and such a Son, how wonderful God's love in adopting us! We needed a Father, but He did not need sons."

If you have not had a meaningful relationship with your earthly father, it may be hard for you to fully comprehend a caring, loving heavenly Father. Unlike some earthly fathers, God is always available to you. He will neither leave you nor forsake you—He is with you all the time. He desires to be intimately involved in every aspect of your life. By adopting you, He has chosen you to have the full privilege of being His own.

Many similarities can be seen between God's adoption of us and the legal adoption of a child. An adopted child is not inferior to any other child in the family. Adopted children carry the family name, and their inheritance is secure because they, too, are legal heirs.

However, there is one difference between legal adoption and God's adoption: A legally adopted child will not receive the same nature as the newly adoptive parents, who have different biological genes and characteristics. Yet when you are adopted by God, you always receive a new nature—the nature of your heavenly Father.

History tells us that when the New Testament was written, it was understood an adoption could never be revoked. Do you realize what that means in light of your relationship with God? Once you are selected, you can never be rejected. You will never be emotionally abandoned. You will always have a home in God's heart. Seeing yourself through God's eyes, you are His child forever.

Personalize these verses in your own words: Romans 8:15 Galatians 4:5-7. Father, through Your eyes I can see that I...I am secure because...I am adopted by God.

([Seeing Yourself Through God's Eyes- A 31-Day Devotional Guide](#))

The Father's sole begotten Son

Was born, the virgin's Child, on earth;

His cross for us adoption won,

The life and grace of second birth.

Here is **Fanny Crosby's** great hymn "[Adopted \(play\)](#)"...

O what a blessing, how can I express it?  
Out of the fullness of rapture I sing,  
Now by the Father received and adopted,  
I am a child and an heir of a king.

**Refrain**

*I am adopted, O wonderful love,  
Heir to a heritage purchased above;  
Tell it, my soul, and joyfully sing,  
I am a child and an heir of a King.*

O what a Father, how tenderly gracious,  
O what a Savior to make me His care;  
Tho' I have slighted, rejected, and grieved Him,  
Still He permits me His kingdom to share.

**Refrain**

O the unsearchable riches He giveth,  
Riches increasing from day unto day;  
Treasures in value all others excelling,  
Treasures that never will rust nor decay.

**Refrain**

When I have finished the work He appoints me,  
When I have ended my journey below,  
Then to my Father and Jesus my Savior,  
Home to a beautiful palace I go.

**Refrain**

**Isaac Watts wrote a hymn...**

**Adoption**

1 BEHOLD what wondrous grace  
The Father hath bestow'd  
On sinners of a mortal race,  
To call them sons of God!  
2 'Tis no surprising thing,  
That we should be unknown:  
The Jewish world knew not their King,  
God's everlasting Son.  
3 Nor doth it yet appear  
How great we must be made;  
But when we see our Saviour here,  
We shall be like our Head.  
4 A hope so much divine

May trials well endure,  
May purge our souls from sense and sin,  
As Christ the Lord is pure.  
5 If in my Father's love  
I share a filial part,  
Send down Thy Spirit, like a dove,  
To rest upon my heart.  
6 We would no longer lie  
Like slaves beneath the throne;  
My faith shall Abba Father cry,  
And Thou the kindred own.  
Isaac Watts, 1709.

### **Behold the Amazing Gift of Love**

Isaac Watts  
Behold th' amazing gift of love  
The Father hath bestowed  
On us, the sinful sons of men,  
To call us sons of God!  
Concealed as yet this honor lies,  
By this dark world unknown,  
A world that knew not when He came,  
Even God's eternal Son.  
High is the rank we now possess;  
But higher we shall rise;  
Though what we shall hereafter be  
Is hid from mortal eyes.  
Our souls, we know, when He appears,  
Shall bear His image bright;  
For all His glory, full disclosed,  
Shall open to our sight.  
A hope so great, and so divine,  
May trials well endure;  
And purge the soul from sense and sin,  
As Christ Himself is pure.

### **Ephesians 1:5 Notes**

**Adoption as sons** (5206) (**huiiothesia** from **huios** = son + **tithemi** = place) literally means "to place one as a son". **Huiiothesia** speaks of being placed in a position of a son or daughter who now possesses the same rights as the parent's natural children. It means to formally and legally declare that someone who is not one's own child is henceforth to be treated and cared for as one's own child, including complete rights of inheritance.

**Huiiothesia** - 5 times all by Paul - Ro 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5 (Not used in the Septuagint)

The concept of **adoption as sons** reaches back into the Old Testament, Paul writing in Romans that

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren (the Jews), my kinsmen according to the flesh (specifically unbelieving Jews), who are Israelites, to whom belongs the **adoption as sons** (huiothesia) and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (Ro 9:3, 4,5 -notes)

**Comment:** God had "adopted" Israel in the Old Testament, Jehovah declaring in Exodus 4:22 to Moses "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is My **son**, my first-born.'"

Here in Ephesians 1:5 Paul reveals the "**past tense**" aspect of our **adoption as sons**, an event predetermined in the heart and mind of God before the foundation of the world.

In **Romans** Paul explains the **present tense** aspect of **adoption as sons** when we were born into God's family and God gave us His Spirit Who kindles the fire of assurance in our souls 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 (as when we were bound to sin and our "father" Satan) leading to fear again, but you have received (right now in this life) a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "Abba! (Daddy) Father!" (Ro 8:14, 15-notes)

**Comment:** Abba is the very name the Beloved Son used when speaking to His Father, Mark 14:36 recording "And He [Jesus] was saying "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

Again in Romans 8 Paul writes of the **future tense** aspect of our **adoption as sons**...

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit (i.e., the first fruits is the Spirit, Whose presence in us guarantees the full completion of our salvation), even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our **adoption as sons** (we were adopted in the past when God predestined us, we are adopted now as believers --see Ro 8:15 above, Gal 4:5 below -- but there awaits the culmination of our privileges and position as adopted sons awaits our future resurrection and glorification - adopted as sons, past, present and future!), the redemption of our body (we have already been redeemed as believers but there is a future culminating redemption when this mortal body will put on immortality in glory). (Ro 8:23-note)

**Comment:** This future tense aspect of adoption as sons of God includes the ultimate privilege of being like him (1John 3:2-note) and being conformed to the glorious body of Christ [Php 3:21-note]

In a parallel passage in **Galatians** Paul describes the present aspect of adoption of sons of God writing that...

when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption as sons**. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave (to sin, Satan or the fear he orchestrates), but a son (we are adopted sons), and if a son then an heir through God." (Galatians 4:4, 5, 6, 7)

**Comment:** The intimacy of our new relationship with God the Father - "Abba! Father!" - stands in striking contrast to our prior relationship of enslavement to **Sin**.)

**Adoption** (see [ISBE article on adoption](#)) is a well known human institution but supernatural adoption of believers by God is far more than a name. A man adopts one to be his son and his heir that does not at all resemble him, but whosoever God adopts for His child is like Him (2Pe 1:4-note) he not only bears His heavenly Father's name, but His image.

**Adoption**, was a commonly known legal procedure in the Hellenistic world, the most famous example being Julius Caesar's adoption of his great-nephew Octavius, who later succeeded him as the emperor Caesar Augustus. Often a wealthy, childless man would adopt a young slave, who would trade his slavery for sonship, with all its concomitant privileges. This adoption meant at least three things all of which have spiritual parallels for believers who are now sons and daughters of God...

(1) **It brought about a total break with the old family and a new family relation with all its rights, privileges and responsibilities.** The adopted person lost all rights in his old family, and gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new family. In the most literal sense, and in the most binding legal way, he got a new father!

(2) **The adopted son became an heir to his new father's estate.** No matter how many other sons there were at the time or how many were born thereafter, he was co-heir with them. This was not subject to change.

(3) **The old life of the adoptee was completely erased.** All debts and obligations were legally canceled. The adopted son was regarded by the law as a new person. William Barclay cites a case in Roman history that shows how completely this was true. The Roman emperor Claudius adopted Nero so that Nero could succeed him as emperor. Claudius had a daughter named Octavia. Nero wished to marry Octavia to seal the alliance. Although they were not blood relations, in the eyes of the law they were now brother and sister and could not marry. The Roman senate had to pass a special law in order for them to marry.

In like manner, believers, when they are adopted, are removed from under the authority of their previous father, Satan (see Jn 8:44) and are given a new Father. They are guaranteed an inheritance with all the children of God, and as Paul explains later (Ep 1:14-note) the Holy Spirit is the down payment and guarantee of their inheritance. The Spirit is also the witness that adoption has taken place (Ro 8:14, 15-notes). Finally, the adopted sons are new persons, in that all their sins are forgiven, and they have a clean slate before God. What a tremendous blessing to know that God has made us His own and that this was predetermined most likely before the foundation of the world "according to the kind intention of His will"!

Second, it is the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of adoption who is given to us as a permanent witness to our adoption. It is the Spirit who assures believers of their relationship with God and causes them to cry "Abba, Father" (Ro 8:15-note; Gal. 4:5). And not only this, but it is the Spirit who assures believers of their freedom from the bondage of the law (Gal. 4:5) and frees them from fear (Ro 8:15-note).

Finally, while adoption is a present possession for believers, it also has a future aspect. Although believers have received the "first-fruits of the Spirit," they are still waiting for the redemption of the body, which is considered to be part of "the adoption" (Ro 8:23-note). It will be complete only when Jesus returns and changes this vile body into a glorified one.

**S Lewis Johnson** writes that when Paul used **adoption as sons** he may have had in mind the idea of true adoption as practiced in the Roman Empire at that time in history. Johnson goes on to say that...

a true adoption, (is the process) by which an individual is taken out of one family and put in another family. In the Roman world, the family was based on what was called the *patria potestas*, that is "the father's power." The father had absolute power among the Romans. He not only had absolute power over his children so far as disciplining them is concerned, but he had power over them as long as he lived. He could actually put children to death in Roman Law. In fact, even when a son became a magistrate, he was still under his own father. So, for a child to be taken out of one Roman family, and placed in another family, was a very, very significant thing. In fact the ceremony is so interesting I'm going to read a little bit to you about it.

Deon Cassius tells us that the Roman Law was that the Law of the Romans gave a father absolute authority over his son, and that for the son's whole life. It gives him authority, if he so chooses, to imprison him, to scourge him, to make him work on his estate as a slave in fetters, even to kill him. The right still continues to exist even if the son is old enough to play an active part in political affairs, even if he's been judged worthy to occupy the magistrate's office, and even if he is held in honor by all men. It is quite true that when a father was judging his son, he was supposed to call the adult male members of the family into consultation, but it was not necessary that he should do so. There are actual instances of cases in which a father did condemn his son unto death. Silast, in the Catiline Conspiracy, tells how a son called Allus Fulvius joined the rebel Cataline. He was arrested on the journey and brought back. And his father ordered that he should be put to death. The father did this on his own private authority. The father gave as his reason, "He had begotten him not for Cataline against his country, but for his country against Cataline."

Under Roman Law a child could not possess anything, and any inheritance willed to him or a gift given to him became the property of the father. So it was a serious step to take a child out of one family and put him another. The ritual of adoption must have been very impressive. It was carried out by a symbolic sale in which copper and scales were used. Twice, the real father "sold" his son, and twice he bought him back. Finally, he sold him a third time and at the third sale, he did not buy him back. After this, the adopting father had to go the praetor, one of the principal Roman magistrates, and plead the case for the adoption. And only after all this had been gone through was the adoption complete. But when the adoption was complete, it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and completely lost all rights in his old family, and furthermore all his old debts were considered to be paid – he was a new person. ([Ephesians 1:1-4 The Work of the Father - Audio](#))

Puritan **Thomas Gataker** writing on adoption into God's family noted that...

"The least degree of sincere sanctification...is a certain sign of adoption, a sure argument to [the Christian] that he has it, that he is the adopted child of God."

**Gerald Cowen** has some thoughts on huiothesia...

Huiothesia (adoption) is formed by combining huios (son) and thesis (a placing) and literally means "the placing as a son" or "adoption." Vine says that huiothesia "signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong."

In the Greek world the word is found only as early as the second century B.C.; however, the concept of adoption (place a son) is much earlier. In Crete (fifth century B.C.) adoption had "to take place on the market-square before the assembled citizens and from the speaker's tribunal.

The rules allowed adoption even when there were already male descendants . . . The adopted son is introduced . . . and inscribed in the koina grammateia. "4 This process was usually connected with the making of a will. Moulton and Milligan cite an example from the Greek papyruses:

We agree, Heracles and his wife Isarion on the one part, that we have given away to you, Horion, for adoption our son Patermouthis, aged about two years, and I Horion on the other part, that I have him as my own son so that the rights proceeding from succession to my inheritance shall be maintained for him.

In the Jewish world official adoption was not practiced. The word is not used at all in the Old Testament. It is referred to by Jews living outside Israel, such as Philo. However, he used it in a figurative sense to refer to the relation of the wise person to God.

In Roman society the father had absolute power over his family; in the early days, at least, he had power of life and death over them. Barclay adds, "In regard to his father a Roman son never came of age. No matter how old he was, he was still under the patria potestas."5 Therefore, for a son to be adopted, he had to be transferred from under the authority of his father to another's, which was equally absolute.

There were two steps. The first step was called MANCIPATIO. It consisted of a mock sale in which the father twice symbolically sold his son, and twice bought him back. The third time he did not buy him back.

The second step was a ceremony called VINDICATIO. The new father went to a Roman magistrate and presented the proposed adoption before him. When this was finished, the adoption was complete. This ceremony was carried out in the presence of seven witnesses. This was in case some dispute arose after the death of the adopting father, so that the inheritance of the adopted person was guaranteed.

In the New Testament "adoption" is used only by Paul. On one occasion he referred to Israel's adoption by God as His chosen people (Rom. 9:4). The other four references speak of the believer's relationship with God. Romans 8:15 says, "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." In the same chapter (Ro 8:23), adoption is spoken of as future (at least partially): "But ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." Galatians 4:5 gives further explanation of this concept of adoption. Jesus came to redeem those under the law "that we might receive the adoption of sons." Then Paul spoke of adoption as already complete: "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (author's italics). Ephesians 1:5 explains that adoption was part of God's will from ages past: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of His will."

The use of huiothesia in the New Testament can be summarized as follows. First, it speaks of the special relationship believers have with God. It speaks of "sonship," but one distinct from that assured by natural descent. In this respect the believers are contrasted with Jesus. Believers are put into the relationship of sons by adoption; Jesus is the unoriginated, unique Son who always was the Son and therefore did not need to be adopted. Second, it is the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of adoption who is given to us as a permanent witness to our adoption. It is the Spirit who assures believers of their relationship with God and causes them to cry "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5). And not only this, but it is the Spirit who assures believers of their freedom from the bondage of the law (Gal. 4:5) and frees them from fear (Rom. 8:15). Finally, while adoption is a present possession for believers, it also has a future aspect. Although believers have received the "first-fruits of the Spirit," they are still waiting for the redemption of the body, which is considered to be part of "the adoption" (Rom. 8:23). It will be complete only when Jesus returns and changes this vile body into a glorified one.

Adoption, as it was practiced in the Roman world of Paul's day, meant three things. Barclay points out, "The adopted person lost all rights in his old family, and gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new

family. In the most literal sense, and in the most binding legal way, he got a new father."6

Next, he became an heir to his new father's estate. No matter how many other sons there were at the time or how many were born thereafter, he was co-heir with them. This was not subject to change.

Finally, the old life of the adoptee was completely erased. All debts were legally canceled. He was regarded by the law as a new person. Barclay cites a case in Roman history that shows how completely this was true. The Roman emperor Claudius adopted Nero so that Nero could succeed him as emperor. Claudius had a daughter named Octavia. Nero wished to marry Octavia to seal the alliance. Although they were not blood relations, in the eyes of the law they were now brother and sister and could not marry. The Roman senate had to pass a special law in order for them to marry.

In like manner, believers, when they are adopted, are removed from under the authority of Satan and given a new Lord, who is now also their Father. They are guaranteed an inheritance with all the children of God, of which the Holy Spirit is the down payment and guarantee. The Spirit is also the witness that adoption has taken place. Finally, they are new persons, all their sins are forgiven, and they have a clean slate before God. What a tremendous blessing to know that God has made us His own. ([Salvation- Word Studies from the Greek New Testament- Gerald Cowen](#))

**Through (1223) (dia)** is a preposition of intermediate agency. Christ is the intermediate agent of the Father to bring to fruition His purpose of placing believers as adult sons through His finished work on the Cross, satisfying the just requirements of God's law that we broke.

**To Himself (846) (auto)** refers to the Father Who had previously marked us out with a view to adopting us as sons for Himself for His own satisfaction that He might lavish His love on us.

God has preordained that we would share His very nature...like Father, like son! Am I living up to my potential in Christ? Peter phrases the same idea this way calling us **partakers of His divine nature**...

For by these (His own glory and excellence) He has granted (perfect tense = an abiding gift, speaks of permanence of the grant, He won't renege on His word to His beloved!) to us His precious (costly, valuable, same word used of the blood of Jesus in 1Pe 1:19 [note]) and magnificent (very great, exceeding great, preeminent, in a sense beyond adequate description) promises (assurances), in order that by them (by what? His promises -- which means we need to saturate our mind with His word of Truth that the Spirit would renew our thinking) you might **become partakers** (those who commune, have fellowship with, partner with, are companions with - Do you really believe this? Does your everyday life demonstrate to the lost world you believe this radical truth?) **of the divine nature** (no, we are not "little gods", but His life is now our life Col 3:4 - notes, His Spirit now our enablement, Ep 5:18 - notes), having escaped (note past tense! The verb is unique and means we have escaped completely! Sure we are in the world, but we are no longer *of* this decaying world which is passing away) the corruption (state of ruin, decay, deterioration) that is in the world by lust (epithumia). (2Pe 1:4-note)

**Accepted** - As the gospel was being presented to a woman, she explained she had tried her best to please God. Then she added, "But I'm afraid God will never accept me."

The Christian talking with her said, "I agree with you. He never will."

A look of astonishment came over the woman's face, for she had not expected such a response.

The believer then explained, "No, He never will, but God has accepted His Son, and if you join yourself to Him through faith, you will find God's favor!"

Many people have been deceived into thinking they must somehow earn acceptance in the eyes of God. The Bible, however, tells us that there is nothing in us, nor in what we do, that can in any way merit God's love and favor (Ro 3:28; Eph. 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Our salvation is rooted in God's sovereign choice, His mercy, and Christ's sacrificial death for us (Eph. 1:4, 5, 6,7).

Trying to understand why God accepts us may baffle our minds, but the how is clear. Our acceptance comes in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for our sin, and who joins us to Himself. When we put our personal trust in Him and accept His forgiveness, we can be sure that we have been accepted. --Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Sons of God, beloved in Jesus!  
O the wondrous word of grace;

In His Son the Father sees us,  
And as sons He gives us place.

-Whittle

**God accepts all who accept His Son.**