



World Christian Fellowship

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Adoption

Adopted into some unknown family!

Exodus 2:10, *And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."*

Hebrews 11:24, *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,*

Adopted by their relative

Esther 2:7, *And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.*

Adopted by their own family

Luke 15:11-24, ¹¹ *Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son*

gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." '

²⁰ "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

These are three illustrations of adoption, and these will help us to answer the question.

What does Adoption mean?

‘the placing of a son’.

Act of leaving one's natural family and entering into the privileges and responsibilities of another.

In the Bible, adoption is one of several family-related terms used to describe the process of salvation and its subsequent benefits.

God is a father who graciously adopts believers in Christ into his spiritual family and grants them all the privileges of heirship. Salvation is much more than forgiveness of sins and deliverance from condemnation. It is also a position of great blessing. Believers are children of God.

God declares that he is the Father of the nation Israel, whom he loves as his child.

Isaiah 1:2, *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me;*

Hosea 11:1, *"When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.*

God tells Pharaoh, "Israel is my firstborn son"

Exodus 4:22, *Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

More specifically, God says to David (and the Messiah)

Psalms 2:7, *"I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.*

David's descendant

2 Samuel 7:14, *I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.*

Although not precisely adoption passages, the instances of declared sonship in the Old Testament provide a theological foundation for Israel's designation as the children of God.

The Greek word for adoption (*huiothesia* [uiJoqesiva]) means to "place as a son" and is used only by Paul in the New Testament.

Romans 9:4, *who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;*

Paul refers to the Old Testament idea of Israel's special position as the children of God.

There are four references as adoptions in the New Testament, it describes that how believers become children of God through

his gracious choice. The full scope of God's work of salvation past, present, and future is seen in adoption.

The believer's adoption as a child of God was determined by God from eternity.

This adoption is not the result of any merit on the part of the believer, but solely the outworking of God's love and grace!

The Foundation of Adoption

The adoption is located not in the act of humans adopting humans, but in God adopting humans. This is not part of God's ordinary providence in the world, but it is at the heart of the gospel.

Galatians 4:4-5, *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

God did not have to use the concept of adoption to explain how he saved us, or even how we become part of his family. He could have stayed with the language of new birth so that all his children were described as children by nature only.

John 1:12-13, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His*

name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

But God chose to speak of us as adopted as well as being children by new birth. This is the most essential foundation of the practice of adoption.

Adoption costed God but its free for us!

To redeem means to obtain or to set free by paying a price which we saw in detail in the previous lesson.

What was the price that God paid for our freedom from sin and adoption?

Galatians 3:13, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),*

It cost God the price of his Son's life.

There are huge costs in adopting children. Some are financial, and some are emotional. There are costs in time and stress for the rest of your life. You never stop being a parent till you die. And the stresses of caring about adult children can be as great, or greater, than the stresses of caring for young children. There is something very deep and right about the embrace of this cost for the life of a child!

God's cost to adopt us was infinitely greater than any cost we will endure in adopting and raising children.

Privileges of Adoption

Ephesians 1:4-5, *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

We, as believers, were adopted in the purpose of God before the creation of the world.

There is definite purpose of God in adopting us into HIS family.

What are the privileges and blessings which are ours as the result of our adoption?

1. Legal status of the child.

Galatians 4:4-6, *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"*

Legal realities pertaining to our adoption which God had to deal with. His own justice and law demanded that we be punished and excluded from his presence because of for our sins. Righteousness was required, and punishment demanded.

God had to satisfy HIS justice and HIS law to adopt sinners into his family. God made this possible by the life, death, and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ.

This means that the status of being a son legally preceded the experience of the Spirit coming to give us the affections of sons. We are legally sons before we experience the joy of sonship. The object work of our salvation (two thousand years ago at Calvary) precedes and grounds the subjective experience of our salvation by the Spirit today.

The legal transactions precede and under gird the growth of family feelings. If the legal red tape seems long and hard, keep in mind that this tape is not yet red with your blood, but Jesus satisfied all the legal demands precisely by shedding his blood.

2. Blessed with the Spirit of sonship

Galatians 4:6, *⁶And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"*

You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Romans 8:15-16, *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”*¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

God does not leave us in the condition of aliens when he adopts us. He does not leave us with no feelings of acceptance and love. Rather, he pours his Spirit into our hearts to give us the experience of being embraced in the family. What is remarkable about these two texts is the term ‘abba’. It is an Aramaic word. Why then does Paul use it, transliterated, in these two letters written in Greek?

The answer is that it was the way Jesus spoke to His Father, in spite of the fact that virtually no one in Jewish culture referred to God with this endearing word ‘abba’. It stunned the disciples.

They held onto it as a precious remnant of the very voice of Jesus in the language he spoke.

Mark 14:36, *And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”*

Therefore, in adopting us, God give us the very Spirit of his Son and grants us to feel the affections of belonging to the very family of God.

In the mercy of God, in our families God works to awaken affections in adopted children for their parents that are far more than legal outcomes. They are deeply personal and spiritual bonds. Adopted children do not infer that they are our children by checking out the adoption papers. A spirit pervades our relationship that bears witness to this reality. Like the other children in the family, they all cry, "Daddy."

Praise God that he gives us both legal standing as his children and the very Spirit of his Son so that we find ourselves saying from a heart of deep conviction, "Abba, Father."

We have received His SPIRIT. Look up Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. Every son of God has already received the Holy Spirit of adoption whereby he comes to God and calls Him "Father".

3. We have been given His NAME

When a child is adopted by earthly parents, and is legally registered as their son, he usually takes the name of the parents. God has brought us into His family and has given us the status of sons and the privilege of bearing His name.

Ephesians 3:14-15, *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

And what is the Name of names which we bear?

Acts 11:26, *And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

Acts 26:28, *Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”*

1 Peter 4:16, *Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

4. We are being conformed to His IMAGE.

Romans 8:29, *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

When we become sons of God, the Holy Spirit, who enters our heart, begins to conform us, or change us, into the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

God's plan is that we should be like Him, and when we see Him we shall be like Him.

1 John 3:2, *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

5. We experience His COMFORT

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

Isaiah 66:13, *As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."*

Lord Jesus gave this wonderful picture for us to understand the comfort of our God.

Matthew 23:37, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"*

This changes the metaphor, but it emphasises the same truth, namely, that the Lord protects and comforts us just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings.

6. We get disciplined by our Father

Yes, it's a wonderful privilege to get corrected disciplined and trained by God.

Make no mistake about it, this is a blessing, a privilege to be enjoyed by those who are the sons of God!

Hebrews 12:6-11, *For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”* ⁷*If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?* ⁸*But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.* ⁹*Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?* ¹⁰*For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.* ¹¹*Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

When God's chastening/ disciplining/ training hand is upon us, we should rejoice!

Philippians 1:6, *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

7. We should enjoy His LIBERTY.

Romans 8:19-23, *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

Paul speaks of the liberty from sin!

Liberty and all that has resulted from sin, which will one day be experienced by the whole creation!

This is the liberty every son of God may enjoy. Servants do not have the liberty which sons have, and we are sons!

John 15:13-15, *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have*

called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

8. We are going to share His GLORY.

Romans 8:17, *and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

We shall sit with Him on His throne and enjoy Him through all eternity!

Colossians 3:4, *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

Responsibilities of Adoption

Every privilege carries with it a responsibility!

2 Peter 3:11, *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,*

1. We have received His Spirit, be careful not to grieve Him.

Ephesians 4:30, *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

When we study the verses 17 to 32 in the same chapter carefully we can identify the things which grieve Him.

There is no greater incentive to holy living than the constant reminder that the Holy Spirit dwells within.

2. We have been given His Name, not to bring any dishonour upon Him.

Acts 9:15, *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.*

2 Timothy 2:19, *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

Acts 5:41, *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

Nothing hinders the work of God more than when Christians bring dishonour upon His name.

3. We are being conformed to His image: let us be submissive to the hands of the Potter.

Jeremiah 18:1-6,

Isaiah 64:8, *But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.*

Sometimes His dealings with us may be painful, and often they will be perplexing but always they are for our good.

4. We experience His comfort: let us do so and let us share it with others.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

Hebrews 10:25, *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

How wonderful it is that we can experience His comfort! But let us be careful that we do not become selfish and self-centred in our enjoyment of his blessings.

5. We should enjoy His liberty, let us be victorious over every form of carnal or legal bondage.

John 8:36, *Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

Romans 8:2, *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Lazarus was raised from the dead, but he had “his hands and feet wrapped around with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face” (John 11:44) – work, walk and witness!

6. We must expect His disciplining, let us be exercised by it.

Hebrews 12:11, *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

1 Corinthians 11:27-32, *Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.³⁰ For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.³² But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*

In every time of testing we should ask, “What new lesson is the Lord seeking to teach me?”

7. We are going to share His glory: let us be humbled by this rapturous prospect.

Revelation 1:17, *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.*

1 John 3:1-2, *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

Conclusion

- The present reality of the believer's adoption into the family of God is release from the slavery of sin and the law and a new position as a free heir of God.
- Entering in to salvation brings the rights and privileges of free sonship.
- The intimacy of a relationship with God the Father in contrast to the ownership of slavery is a remarkable feature of salvation.

- Like many aspects of salvation, there is an eschatological component of adoption. Believers "wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:23).
- The full revelation of the believer's adoption is freedom from the corruption present in the world. Being a member of God's family includes the ultimate privilege of being like him (1 John 3:2)
- When we are born again we become children in God's family (John 1:12-13),
- God becomes our loving Heavenly Father (John 6:32).
- We not only become children of God; we become sons of God and legally recognised heirs – Romans 8:14-17.
- Thus, by adoption, God gives us a new status, and this new status, at once brings us into the place of new Privilege and of new Responsibility.