

Hunter Whiddon

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Soteriology

Adoption

The Biblical doctrine of Adoption gives the lie to the false notion of the “Universal Fatherhood of God.” There is an essential need to be brought into the family of God for Him to be our Father. (“Ye are of your father, the Devil,” said Jesus to the unsaved Pharisees — John 8:44. See also: Ephesians 2:2,3; I John 3:10.) We cannot be “unborn” from Satan’s family; therefore we have to be transferred from our old family to God’s family.

When a person is saved, he does not become a servant, but a SON. He or she is adopted into the family of the Heavenly Father, given legal status as a son (or daughter), made an heir of God and a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Adoption is the culmination of justification — it, too, is a legal term. “Christ took our place; therefore, when we believe on Him, we take His place as a son.” (1)

I. THE MEANING OF “ADOPTION”

Adoption means to legally make a child one's own who is by birth the child of another. The Greek word translated “adoption” (hiothesia) means the “placing as a son.”

The custom of adoption in Biblical times formally and legally placed the child in the position of a legal son and gave to him all the rights and privileges of a son. He was recognized as an heir by law.

In the New Testament, the term has reference to that aspect of salvation that elevates the sinner to the privileges of sonship. In Christ, we are not only made God's children in character (the divine nature) through regeneration, but we are made God's children in invested privilege through adoption. “We became sons experientially by regeneration; but legally by adoption.” (2)

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” — Galatians 4:4-7.

The account of the “prodigal son” in Luke 15:22 describes the blessing of adoption. Galatians 4:1-5 likens adoption to the attaining of ‘adulthood’ with all its status.

II. THE MANNER OF “ADOPTION”

A. THE ADOPTION IS CONVEYED IMMEDIATELY:

There is no waiting — adoption is the present standing of every believer.

John 1:12 — “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

Galatians 3:26 — “For ye ARE all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

I John 3:2 — “Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God...”

B. THE FULL REALIZATION OF OUR ADOPTION OCCURS AT THE RESURRECTION:

Most of the things the father has prepared for His children will not be possessed until Heaven is reached

Romans 8:18 — “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Romans 8:23 — “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, WAITING for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

I John 3:1-3 — “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, and it DOTH NOT YET APPEAR what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

III. THE BENEFITS OF SALVATION

The privilege of adoption is that the believer has everything that Christ possesses. Some of the blessings of adoption are:

1. **A FAMILY NAME** — **Ephesians 3:14,15** “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,”

I John 3:1 “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.”

2. **A FAMILY LIKENESS** — **Romans 8:29** “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

3. A FAMILY NATURE — II Peter 1:4 “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

4. A FAMILY LOVE — John 13:35 “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

I John 3:14 “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

5. A LOYAL SPIRIT — Romans 8:15 “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

6. A FATHERLY CARE — Luke 12:27-32 “Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

7. A FATHERLY COMFORT — Isaiah 66:13 “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”

II Corinthians 1:4 “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

8. A FATHER’S CHASTISEMENT—Hebrews 12:5-11

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:”

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

“But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”

“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.”

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

9. A FULL INHERITANCE — Romans 8:17 “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

I Peter 1:3-5 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,”

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”