

Adoption

Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 12

1. All those that are justified God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption; by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

Adoption neglected or misunderstood

- Absent or minimized in most major systematic theologies (Turretin, Hodge, Bavinck, Berkhof, Hoekema)
- Confused with justification or regeneration
- “The universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man”

The need for adoption

- Loneliness
- Insecurity
- Bigotry

Picture of salvation	Picture of need
Union with Christ	Separation from Christ
Calling	Deafness
Regeneration	Death
Conversion	Wandering away from God
Justification	Condemnation
Adoption	Slavery
Sanctification	Corruption

Slavery

- “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption.” (Rom. 8:15)
- “No longer a slave, but a son” (Gal. 4:7)
- **The basic principles of this world** (Gal. 4:3, 8-11; Col. 2:8, 20-21)
 - Worldly ideas/philosophies (the pagan error)
 - Legalism and works righteousness (the Judaizing error)
 - Their underlying evil spiritual forces

Adoption in the Old Testament

- “They are the Israelites, and to them belong the adoption...” (Rom. 9:4)
- God as Father in the OT

- Only called “father” 15 times in the OT (compared to 118 times in John alone!)
- “God’s son” in the OT
 - The nation of Israel (Hos. 11:1)
 - The king of Israel (2 Sam. 7:14)
 - Individual Israelites (Prov. 3:11-12)

Adoption in John

- “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)
- “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” (1 John 3:1)

Adoption in Paul

- “God sent forth his Son... to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons...” (Gal. 4:5)
- “He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will...” (Eph. 1:5)
- For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For 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, and 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. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom. 8:14-23)

Marks of the Spirit’s presence

- We are led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14).
- We cry “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15).
- The witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8:16).
- We groan in this life (Rom. 8:23).

New privileges and responsibilities

- A new status
 - “The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00 AM for a glass of water is a child. We have that kind of access.” (Tim Keller)
- A new sense of God’s care
 - “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (Matt. 6:8)
- A new inheritance
 - “If we endure, we will also reign with him.” (2 Tim. 2:12)