

# The Christian Doctrine of Adoption

Sermon 24 in the Romans Series

## Romans 8:15-17

“Justification means our acceptance with God as righteous and the bestowal of the title to everlasting life. Regeneration is the renewing of our hearts after the image of God. But these blessings in themselves, however precious they are, do not indicate what is conferred by the act of adoption. By adoption the redeemed become sons or daughters of the Lord God Almighty; they are introduced into and given the privileges of God’s family.”

John Murray: Redemption Accomplished and Applied

### I. Initial observations regarding Adoption in verses 15-17

1. We can think of the “spirit of slavery” and bondage to be the exact opposite of what it means to be lovingly adopted.
2. We see – since we cry out “Abba, Father” – that we can rely on our Father to hear us as we cry out to Him.
3. The Holy Spirit – who applies salvation to us by changing our hearts – bears witness without our Spirit that God truly is our Father.
4. If we have been adopted – we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. This is almost unbelievable – but this is the privilege we have because of adoption.
5. Perseverance is necessary – suffering with Him is introduced – v. 18-19

### II. Four verses that speak specifically about Christians and Adoption

Romans 8:15; Romans 8:23; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5

### III. Adoption as Practiced in Rome

In the Roman Empire adoption was considered **a privilege** – and it is this idea that lies behind the Christian Doctrine of Adoption. In the Roman Empire “it secured for the adopted child a right to the name and the property of the person by whom he had been adopted.” It carried no stigma, it was considered special to have been adopted.

Spurgeon said

“Adoption is that act of God, whereby men who were by nature the children of wrath, even as the others, and were of the lost and ruined family of Adam, are from no reason in themselves but entirely of the pure grace of God translated out of the evil...family of Satan and brought actually and virtually into the family of God.”

## IV. The Benefits of Adoption

Our Reformed forefathers believed it was such an important doctrine that it merited an entire chapter unto itself in our Confession – Chapter 12..

*From Jim Renihan's Seminary notes on the Confession*

1. We have His name
2. We receive the Spirit of adoption (Holy Spirit)
3. We have bold access to the throne of grace
4. We have a relationship with God as “Father”
5. We are pitied, protected, provided for and chastened (Fatherly love)
6. We are never cast off
7. We are sealed unto the day of redemption
8. We inherit the promises of God

## V. The Wonder of Adoption

1. He adopted us even though He did not need Us.
2. Why does He adopt Us?  
Eph 1:5 -- Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children  
By Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
3. He adopted us even though He already had a Son.
4. Who does He Adopt?  
Romans 8:7

## VI. The Blessings of Adoption

1. We have God for a Father.
2. We have a changed Nature
3. We have a Blessed Hope -- 1 John 3:1-2

**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. <sup>2</sup> 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.