

Gal. 4:4-7 (WCF 12) "The Privileges of Sonship"

For the Children: What privileges do you have by being a son or daughter of your parents? You experience love and help from your parents. They feed you, clothe you and shelter you. They buy things for you and maybe give you pocket-money. They teach you about the Lord and discipline you so you learn those lessons well. They comfort you when you are in pain. They pray for you. That is a lot of good that comes from having parents! But what we have as adopted sons, from God, is even better. He gives His children much more through the work of His Son and His Spirit. **Questions:** How did the Lord Jesus make sure we would be adopted by God? What are these great benefits that we have as "sons" through the Lord Jesus? What benefits of adoption does the Holy Spirit bring us?

Introduction:

First Point: The Son of Adoption

- 1) The Fullness of Time: God sent His Son into the world at the best time, according to His plan. The time at which He was born into the world was just right as to the condition of Israel; the peace of the Roman Empire, it's good roads and the disenchantment of the people with their false gods; the common language, Greek; and similar factors
- 2) The Kind of Messiah We Need: Christ was "born of a woman" – fully human, as well as being divine. He needed to be God, man and perfectly righteous in order to redeem sinners. By being born as a man, He was under God's Law. As a Jew, He was also under the OT ceremonial law. As the Representative of elect sinners, He was also under the curse prescribed by the Law upon *our* sin. That is why He had to die on the cross. He was sent for that purpose – to redeem us from the curse of the Law, to obey the Law perfectly for us, as well as to deliver us from having to keep all the ceremonial Law – which He fulfilled. That leaves us free from terror of the Law's demands and penalties, free to serve God with gladness and gratitude
- 3) Following from Redemption: That freedom is best described by the term "son" – in contrast to a slave who simply follows orders, usually from fear of his master. Hence adoption follows from redemption. It is part of God's purpose in sending His Son. When faith joins us to Christ, we are not only justified; we are also declared "sons." For we are united to the Christ, who has Himself been declared to be God's only-Begotten Son
- 4) The Privileges from the Son: The blessings that come from the Son of God include the fact that we now have God's Name and character upon us; freedom from the curse; an inheritance of eternal life, peace and joy in God's favour. Because of Christ, God now pities us, provides for us, and protects us

Second Point: The Spirit of Adoption

- 1) The Spirit of His Son: These benefits must be applied to us. We need to be joined to Christ by faith. The Holy Spirit does that work of application (v. 6, with Rom. 8:15-16). The Father and the Son together sent Him forth for that purpose, to witness to Christ and apply Him to our hearts. Christ gives us the "right" to be sons of God, but the Spirit gives us the power to exercise and enjoy these privileges
- 2) The Sense of Sonship: Christ Himself prayed to His Father as "Abba, Father" (Mk. 14:36). Not surprisingly, the Spirit of the Son cries the same thing within us, causing us to echo that cry. He teaches us to recognize God as our Father and that we are adopted sons. The term "Abba" indicates a very intimate, personal relationship with our Father. Using this term is not a mere formality, it is something we *cry* from the heart (Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:6) – a cry of joy, love, gratitude, and trust. Such cries are evidence that we have indeed been adopted
- 3) The Privileges from the Spirit: The privileges of sonship which the Spirit brings include the ability to pray in this way and draw close to the throne of grace any time; the assurance that we are sons of God; sanctification (showing the family-likeness); Fatherly discipline. The Spirit ensures that we remain sons and never turn away from God and do not have to be cast off

Conclusion: