

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—
Lesson 30—Our Adoption, Q. 34

- I. It is God the Father who adopts us, 1Jn 3.1; Eph 1.4-5. Adoption has always been a part of God’s plan and is the fruit of the good pleasure of His eternal will (Gal 4.4-5; Eph 1.5).
 - A. It is an act of His free grace. Even if we admit that our union with Christ has resulted in our salvation from hell, our reconciliation with God, and our eternal happiness, adoption is a truly remarkable step in God’s purpose.
 - B. For, even being partakers of His nature, does it necessarily follow that we’re to share not only all His grace, but all His glory? does it necessarily follow that we’re to share in His inheritance as Son? and does it necessarily follow that we’re to be not simply regarded as, but really and truly made sons of God? This is the most glorious part and reach of the unsearchable riches of His grace toward us who believe, that He will not only grant us a right to all the privileges of the sons of God, but will commit, through our progressive sanctification, to fit us at last for the eternal weight of glory to which we’ve been entitled by our adoption as sons, even sons of God Himself.
- II. And this is *all because of Christ*, as a benefit of His mediation for us and of our union and communion with Him as the Son of God.
 - A. It was *as the Son of God* that He took up *our humanity* into His natural Sonship. And when His Spirit regenerates us, He makes us partakers of that nature—now a *filial humanity*—which results in our being adopted as sons for His sake. In other words, the Holy Spirit qualifies us in our effectual calling to be co-heirs with Christ by uniting us with His nature (Col 1.12) and then Christ owns us to the Father as His brothers and kinsmen (Heb 2.10-11) and then the Father takes us on as sons by adoption (Eph 1.4-5).
 - B. Nothing—absolute nothing in our salvation, leaves Christ out of view for a single instant. In every crisis in our destiny, it is Christ who stands as Surety for us. It is His recognition that we are His, which decides our fate. He stood for us in the Covenant of Redemption, Heb 10.5-7; and He’ll stand for us on the great Day of Judgment, Heb 2.10-13; 12.2.
 - C. We’re reminded that all the benefits of Christ come *as a whole* unto the sinner united to Him by faith. Our union with Him is the ground upon which all that He is and has is enjoyed by us, Eph 1.3. The benefits of Christ can’t be separated because Christ can’t be divided, Rom 8.30
- III. Like justification, adoption is not a work *within* us in our nature, but an act of God *on our behalf*, an act performed by His free grace and solely for the sake of Jesus, whose brethren we have become by the work of the Spirit. As a change in our *standing*, adoption is completed in an instant, 1Jn 3.1
- IV. Adoption comes with many privileges.
 - A. We are by nature children of the devil and under the wrath of God, 1Jn 3.10; Jn 8.44; Eph 2.3, but by our adoption as sons of God, all our relations to sin, to condemnation on account of it, and slavish terror by reason of it, are totally changed. Being dead to sin, we cannot live in sin any longer. Being alive in Christ, we are free from the dominion of sin and death.
 - B. By adoption, we are transferred out of the family of Satan and admitted into fellowship, communion, and union with Christ, God’s beloved Son, Col 1.13, giving us peace with God, joy in the glory of God, the love of God in our hearts, and the fullness of His Spirit, Rom 5.1-5
 - C. Adoption changes our relations to the law of God. We are no longer under it as a covenant of works, but are in the covenant of grace, in which the law of God serves as a rule of life to guide us in the way of good works to the pleasure of our Father.
 - 1. Christ’s sacrifice paid the law what we owed in *penalties* and Christ’s obedience rendered to the law what we owed in *precepts*.
 - 2. All the demands and terrors and threats of the law pass by us and fall on our Surety. We embrace the law of God, no longer as demanding covenant of works we cannot obey, but as an instrument

of God's grace in a covenant of grace in which we are saved *by* grace *unto* work—as works of love and gratitude.

- D. Adoption changes our relations to the world and providence.
 - 1. We learn to live separate from the world as citizens of the world to come, Eph 5.7-9. Moreover, we recover the right, which Adam lost, to a sanctified use of His creation, 1Tim 4.1-5; 6.17
 - 2. We have the assurance and joy that every providence of God turns on bringing Him glory in doing us good, Rom 8.28
- E. Adoption is especially precious compared with the other benefits of redemption. Justification results in the *happiness* of a courtroom, sanctification results in the *happiness* of a surgery table, but adoption results in the *happiness* of a home and a family. There's nothing like being a child of God, enjoying the freedom to address Him as Father, having the pleasure of sanctified brothers and sisters, and being co-heirs with Christ Himself (Rom 8.17; Jn 1.12).
- V. The benefits of our adoption are many
 - A. We obtain a new name, Isa 62.2; 2Cor 6.18
 - B. We receive the Spirit of adoption as the seal of God against the day of redemption, Rom 8.15; Gal 4.6; Eph 1.13-14
 - C. We are granted access to the throne of grace with boldness, Lk 12.22-32
 - D. We are the objects of God's fatherly sympathy and pity, Ps 103.13-14
 - E. We enjoy the protection of our heavenly Father, Pss 34.7; 121.4; Heb 1.14
 - F. We are provided for by our heavenly Father, Mt 6.30-32; Ps 34.9-10; Phil 4.19
 - G. Fatherly correction is not withheld from us, Heb 12.6; Pss 89.30-34; 119.67, 71
 - H. Unfailing establishment in our state of sonship, Jer 32.40
 - I. We are heirs of all the promises, 2Cor 1.20; Heb 6.12, 17
 - J. We are heirs of a rich and glorious inheritance reserved for us in heaven, 1Pet 1.4; Heb 1.14; 1Pet 3.7; Js 2.5; Rom 8.17
- VI. How glorious will that day be when Christ appears and we are manifest as the sons of God (Rom 8.19)! Christ will acknowledge us as His brethren and put us in full possession of that inheritance which He's gone to prepare for us, Heb 2.10-12. Therefore let us look for His appearing. And in the meantime let us live in accordance with our high character and eternal prospects, walking as children of God, Eph 5.1