

Salvation - Adoption by God

New Citizenship, New Bodies, A Secure Inheritance

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Part three of a series. Read [part two](#).

We come now to our last question: What does adoption promise the believer in the life to come? To answer that question it is important for us to understand one other element in the kind of legal adoption that the Apostle Paul speaks of in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians.

That final important element has three aspects: inheritance rights, citizenship rights and responsibilities, and the restoration of the marred image of God.

A Rich Inheritance

Under the Roman law that Paul is using as his metaphor, the adopted son was given the right to the Father's property. He was given an inheritance. The father's property was his by right of adoption. And that is true for us. We have an inheritance. Our inheritance is our Father's property — all the riches that are in Christ Jesus. The spiritual riches of life in Him now, and the riches of the new heavens and new earth in the life to come. And the Holy Spirit, Ephesians chapter one tells us, is the guarantee or the down-payment of that inheritance.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus

Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him.

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:3-14)

And so the adopted sons of God are continually

giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:12-14)

A New Citizenship

Adoption in Paul's inspired metaphor also meant that the adopted son held the same citizenship as the father. And we are told that our citizenship is in heaven. That is something else that has changed about us. We not only have a new name and a new

family relationship, we also have a new citizenship. We are no longer citizens of the world that is going to perish. We are aliens here. We are citizens of the new world to come. We have the rights of heavenly citizenship, and the responsibility to live like citizens of our Father's kingdom while in this world which is now alien to us.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. (Philippians 3:20-4:1)

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles [that is, among the unsaved], that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation [that is, when God brings any of them to faith in Christ because of your witness] (1 Peter 2:11-12).

To Be Like Christ

Scripture tells us one more thing that will be ours because we are adopted sons of God. In 1st John 3:1 we read these glorious words:

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. 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. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

We shall be like Him! The image of God marred at the fall of our first parents shall be restored, and even more! We shall be like the Lord Jesus Christ! We shall behold Him face

to face, and we shall be like Him, glorified forever. Sons of God forever. Home in the Father's house forever. Living forevermore in a new universe where we are not subject to either the power or the presence of sin and death. Perfect, glorified bodies in His likeness. Partaking with Him in the untold glories of the new heavens and new earth forever and ever. How will this come about? Paul tells us:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:50-58)

Because These Things Are True...

The Apostle John tells us that "everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1st John 3:3). Because we are adopted sons of God, we need to live like it. Not that this saves us, not that this keeps us saved. But we need to understand what is ours. We need to rejoice in it. We need to live in it.

Because these things are true, we need to be purifying ourselves from the things of this world and of this sinful flesh, and turning our hearts more and more toward our loving Heavenly Father and our great Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, living life in this

world by the power of the Holy Spirit. Doing all things through Christ, our elder Brother, who strengthens us. May the Lord give us His grace and His power to live in that hope, purifying ourselves, by the power of the Holy Spirit, until the day we see Him face to face, and we shall be like our Savior forevermore. "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

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