**God does not leave us as orphans. Investigate and comment on the benefits that result from adoption in the life of the believer.**

Word count 1999

When did we become orphans? We need to look at The Fall and Genesis. The garden of Eden could be said to be “*very like a womb-like place, where there is an immanent connection between God and humanity , much like the umbilical cord which connects the fetus to its mother. The garden brings peace and comfort. This intimate relationship is then broken and humanity is orphaned into the world. [[1]](#footnote-0)*

Adoption can be defined as, “*Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family”[[2]](#footnote-1)*

**Scriptural Evidence for Adoption.**

John 1; 12 says, “*Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”[[3]](#footnote-2)*

Those who do not believe in Christ are not children adopted into God’s family but according to Eph.2:3, are “*children of wrath”.*

At the time Jesus tried to tell the Jews, who thought they were God’s children the following, John 8:42-44,”*If God were your father you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires”.*

 In Paul’s letters he repeatedly tells us that we are God’s children, members of his family. Rom. 9:14-17, “*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father”.* The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if needed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.[[4]](#footnote-3)

Being God’s children we are related to one another as believers in Christ, one family. Rom. 9:7-8 tells us that we are children of God through the promise to Isaac, the spiritual promise. The Old Testament does mention that God was father (and mother) to the children of Israel, but the privileges of membership to God’s family did not come until Christ came and the Spirit of the Son of God was poured out into our hearts.[[5]](#footnote-4)

In Gal.3:23-26 Paul tells us that prior to Christ we were custodians of the law (the law was like a foster parent), and through Christ we are justified by faith. Verses 27- 29 state: “*for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed themselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”. [[6]](#footnote-5)* This is amazing news in Christ we are set free.

1 John 3:1-2; “*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”.* John frequently calls his readers “*children”* or “*little children”*. This implies that there is more to come….that our adoption is still to happen, that perhaps we have not fully received the benefits and privileges of being adopted into God’s family until Christ returns and we receive our resurrection bodies. [[7]](#footnote-6) Rom. 8:23 Paul also says, “*Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies'*'. Therefore our new resurrection bodies will be in harmony with Jesus’s glorified body.

Heb 2:12, “*He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises*”. Jesus was not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters (although He is begotten and we are adopted) . He can be looked upon to be our older brother in God’s family. “*The firstborn among brothers and sisters”* Rom.8:29. I find it hard to look at Jesus as a brother, to me He is much more than a brother could ever be. However it does make our relationship with Jesus far more on a personal level.

Jesus says to Mary Magdalene, “I *am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God”.* Jesus therefore maintains a clear distinction between the far greater and eternal sense in which God is His Father and the sense in which God is our Father. [[8]](#footnote-7)

Whilst discussing in a break out room in Church, Rom.8;17…’*we are co-heirs with Christ’,* made the point of us being Brothers and sisters with Christ, a realisation for one of the members who had never thought of Jesus as being a brother to us!

**Adoption follows Conversion and is an outcome of Saving Faith**

When we think of the expression “Born again”, we think of rebirth(regeneration), children being born into a family. However the New Testament does not connect adoption with rebirth, but adoption is through saving farith. If we trust Christ, God adopts us into His family.

Gal. 2:23, “*Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until faith that was to come would be revealed”* John also writes, “*Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”.* These two verses show us that adoption follows conversion and is God's response to our faith. The work of the Holy Spirit gives us assurance of our adoption.[[9]](#footnote-8)

**Adoption is distinct from Justification (the action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God)**

God could forgive our sins and make us right before Him without us being adopted into His family. Therefore it is a privilege to be adopted into God’s family. Rebirth is to do with our Spiritual life within, justification is to do with our standing within God’s law, and adoption is to do with our eternal blessings, and our relationship with God the Father. With this in mind we should realise the wonderful thing God has given us by making us His children![[10]](#footnote-9)

**The privileges of Adoption**

By being adopted into God’s family we can have a direct relationship with Him. We can speak directly to God. Matt. 6:9, “*Our Father in heaven*”. We can look upon God as a loving and good father[[11]](#footnote-10). Matt Redman’s song, Good Good Father, sums this up: You're a Good Good Father, it’s who you are, And I’m loved by you, It’s who I am, our identity in God by being adopted into His family.

God is our heavenly Father. Who we can call to for help, guidance, support and many more. Through the death of Jesus who made a way for this to be possible.

I asked my ladies group what words they would use to sum up Jesus ministry on Earth, these were some of their words, “hope, salvation, rescuer, Holy one, friend, saviour, blessing, blessed, life giver, waymaker, strength and my all! These are what it means to be adopted into God’s family!

God also endows on us many gifts. Matt. 7:11, *“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”* The Holy Spirit is undoubtedly the most powerful. It enables us to do God’s work, to bring His kingdom to Earth for His glory. To comfort us and empower us. Luke 11:13, “*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” [[12]](#footnote-11)*

As adopted children we are also led by the spirit, He gives us the desires to be obedient to God, our moral compass. Rom. 8:14, “*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God”.[[13]](#footnote-12)*

We also have a great inheritance in heaven. We are joint heirs with Christ. Gal.4;7 “S*o you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir”.[[14]](#footnote-13)*  We are co-heirs with Christ, this is amazing to think we have, and will have the same blessings bestowed on Christ on us. We don’t have to earn it, just believe in the name of Christ Jesus, Son of God, God incarnate.

When we get to heaven we have an eternal inheritance, one that will not perish, spoil or fade (1 Pet. 1;4, “and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you”). Wow, we do not have to fear death, death is not the end! We will be served by angels! (we are now also!) Heb.1;14, *“are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”[[15]](#footnote-14)*

God disciplines us as His adopted children. Heb.12;7, “*Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?”*  This is so we grow in righteousness and holiness when we are disciplined by our heavenly Father. Rom. 8;17 tells us that we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, and that we share his sufferings in order that we may share his glory. We may suffer in this life.as Christ did, so that we will also inherit great glory in the life to come.[[16]](#footnote-15)

As we are all members of one family, this makes us closer and to have a more indepth relationship with each other. The New Testament tells us many times that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. James 1;2, “ *consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds”.*

As one family the church should be seen to do ‘family work’, all working together as one body. We should not compete or hinder each other. But should encourage one another. New members should be welcomed into God’s family with love and eagerness.[[17]](#footnote-16) To encourage and nurture new christians. To disciple existing members.

And finally as children of God we should imitate our heavenly Father. Eph.5:1, *“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children”*. As we imitate our earthly fathers so we should imitate God. As God is holy then so shall we be, as obedient children. Phil. 2:15, “ *so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation”. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky”.*

Are we shining like stars in this dark world? Are we imitating God in the way we live? Do we bring glory to God and not ourselves? We are adopted into God’s family not by works or deeds but by faith and belief in Jesus Christ. It is a free gift that we should not take for granted. Jesus paid the ultimate price by dying on the cross for our sins so that we could become co-heirs with Him. This is too amazing to take in, but rest assured if you do, your inheritance will be so worth it! To have eternal life where we will not spoil, perish or fade, amen to that!!!

We will receive resurrection bodies like that of Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15.

1. Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner:The Spirit of Adoption, at home in God’s family. Westminster John Knox Press.p93 [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Inter-Varsity Press, p736. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. All further bible references are from the New International Version. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Inter-Varsity Press(IVP), p736 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Inter-Varsity Press, p737 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Inter-Varsity Press, p737 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Inter-Varsity Press, p737 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP, p737 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Inter-Varsity Press, p738 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Inter-Varsity Press, p739 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP, p739 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP, p739 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP, p740 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP, p740 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP,p740 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
16. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP, p741 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
17. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, IVP, p741 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)