

## The Theology of the Westminster Standards

### WCF 12 – Adoption in Christ (Part 2)

*“Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of, the sons of God.” (WSC 34)*

#### I. Review: Adoption in Union with Christ

*All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth [i.e., graciously grants], in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him, as by a father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation. (WCF 12)*

- A. The shorted chapter in the Westminster Confession of Faith
- B. The blessings and grace that come to the believer united to Christ always come as a package.

- 1. **1 Cor 1:30** – *“And because of him [i.e., God the Father] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”*

*“For these fruits of grace are connected together, as it were, by an indissoluble tie, so that he who attempts to sever them does in a manner tear Christ in pieces.” – John Calvin on 1 Cor 1:30*

*“By virtue of the believer’s union with Christ, he doth really possess all things ... I mean that God, three in one, all that he is, and all that he has, and all that he does, all that he has made or done, the whole universe, bodies and spirits, lights, heaven, angels, men and devils, sun, moon, stars, land, sea, fish and fowls, all the silver and gold, kings and potentates, as well as mere men, are as much the Christian’s as the money in his pocket, the clothes he wears, or the house he dwells ... yea, more properly his, more advantageously ... because Christ who certainly doth thus possess all things is entirely his, so that he possesses it all ...” (Jonathan Edwards, Miscellany)*

- C. Like justification, adoption is an “act of God’s free grace” that instantly introduces us into a new status with amazing privileges.

- 1. **1 John 3:1** – *“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”*

#### II. The Privileges of Adoption in Christ

- A. *“... have his [God’s] name put upon them ...”*

- 1. **Matt 28:19** – *“... make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...”*

- B. *“... receive the Spirit of adoption ...”*

- 1. **Rom 8:15** – *“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”*

- C. *“... have access to the throne of grace with boldness ...”*
1. **Eph 3:11–12** – *“This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.”*
- D. *“... are enabled to cry, ‘Abba, Father’ ...”*
1. **Gal 4:6** – *“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”* (compare Rom 8:15 above)
- E. *“... are pitied, protected, provided for ...”*
1. **Ps 103:13** – *“As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.”*
  2. **Prov 14:26** – *“In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.”*
- F. *“... and chastened by him [God], as by a father ...”*
1. **Heb 12:9–10** – *“... we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup> For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.”*
- G. *“... yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.”*
1. **Rom 8:15** – we *“have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”* [the ALREADY]
  2. **Rom 8:23** – *“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”* [the NOT YET]

*“What is still future, and the entire creation longs for, is ‘the revelation of the sons of God,’ which we may fairly gloss as ‘the open revelation of the sons of God’ (v. 19).”*

*– Richard Gaffin on Rom 8:23 (and Rom 8:19)*

3. **1 John 3:2** – *“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”*

*“Do I, as a Christian, understand myself? Do I know my own real identity? My own real destiny? I am a child of God. God is my Father; heaven is my home; every day is one day nearer. My Savior is my brother; every Christian is my brother, too. Say it over and over to yourself the first thing in the morning, last thing at night, as you wait for the bus, anytime when your mind is free, and ask that you may be enabled to live as one who knows it is all utterly and completely true. For this is the Christian’s secret of—a happy life?—yes, certainly, but we have something higher and profounder to say. This is the secret of a Christian life, and of a God-honoring life, and these are the aspects of the situation that really matter. May this secret become fully yours, and fully mine.”* - J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 207, 228.