

The Promises of God

Promise of Adoption and Inheritance

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors - not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.
(Romans 8:12-17)

<http://tinyurl.com/GodOfPromises>

The Promise of Adoption and Inheritance

Overview: God promises to make us His children and heirs.

Teaching Notes:

Romans 8:12–17 → Spirit of adoption.

Galatians 4:4–7 → Full rights as sons.

Ephesians 1:13–14 → Inheritance sealed.

Cross-References: 1 John 3:1–3; Revelation 21:7.

Discussion Guidance: Stress identity and inheritance in Christ.

Edify: Affirm participants by reminding them of their value as God's children.

God's Character in Scripture

God has always called His people "My children"

Israel as God's son

- "Thus says the LORD, 'Israel is my son, my firstborn'" (**Exodus 4:22**).
- "When Israel was a young man, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt." (**Hosea 11:1**).
- But Israel failed to keep the covenant. The Law could not create sons. It only exposed sin. The New Covenant fixes this by giving a new heart and a new Spirit (**Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:26–27**).

Adoption through the Spirit

- "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God... you received the Spirit of adoption... The Spirit himself bears witness... we are children of God. And if children, then heirs." (**Romans 8:14–17**).
- "But when the appropriate time had come, God sent out his Son... to redeem those who were under the law, **so that we may be adopted as sons**... you are no longer a slave but a son, and if you are a son, then you are also an heir through God." (**Galatians 4:4–7**).

Adoption is the work of the Spirit. The Spirit gives us a new identity and a new relationship with God.

God's Character in Scripture

and

God's Character in History

God has always shown father-like care.

Examples

- He carried Israel "*like a man carries his son*" (**Deuteronomy 1:31**).
- He disciplined them "*as a man disciplines his son*" (**Deuteronomy 8:5**).

These moments hint at something greater. Israel was "son" in a national sense. In the New Covenant, sonship becomes personal, intimate, and given by the Spirit.

God's Character Revealed in Jesus

Jesus is the true son... and He shares His sonship with us!

Faith in Jesus makes us God's children

- *"But to all who have received him... he gave the right to become God's children."* (John 1:12).
- *"Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters."* (Hebrews 2:11).
- Jesus brings us into His family. Adoption is not a metaphor. It is a real change in status.

God's Invitation to Know Him

- *"And when you heard the word of truth... you were sealed with the Holy Spirit... who is the down payment of our inheritance."* (Ephesians 1:13-14).
- *"See what sort of love the Father has given to us: that we should be called God's children - and indeed we are!"* (1 John 3:1-3).
- The Spirit is the guarantee. He keeps us. He teaches us how to live as sons and daughters.

Adoption brings security, not fear.

Adoption and the New Covenant

Solves the Core Problem – The Heart

God promises:

- A new heart
- His Spirit within
- Forgiveness of sins
- A personal relationship
- *"I will be your God, and you will be my people."* (Jeremiah 31:31–34)

This is adoption language.

- The Law could not create sons because it could not change hearts.
- The Spirit can.

Key connections:

- **New heart** → new identity as God's child.
- **Spirit within** → Spirit of adoption.
- **Forgiveness** → removal of fear and guilt.
- **Knowing God personally** → relationship of Father and child.
- **New Covenant inheritance** → eternal life, resurrection, and the kingdom.

The Apostles saw adoption as one of the main blessings of the New Covenant.

Adoption and Inheritance in Apostolic Teaching

Our Inheritance Includes...

1. Eternal life

- *"We are heirs... of eternal life."* (Titus 3:7).

2. The Kingdom

- *"The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God."* (1 Corinthians 6:9–10).
- God's children will.

3. Resurrection glory

- *"If we suffer with him, we may also be glorified with him."* (Romans 8:17).

4. God Himself... God is our portion.

- *"You are heirs according to the promise."* (Galatians 3:29).

Abraham's promise always pointed beyond land and nation. It pointed to God giving Himself to His people. Adoption is the fulfillment.

Examples of Adoption in Scripture

Moments that point to the New Covenant reality...

Moses adopted by Pharaoh's daughter (**Exodus 2:10**).

- A picture of someone brought from slavery into royalty.

David and Mephibosheth (**2 Samuel 9**).

- The king brings an undeserving, helpless man to his table.
- This mirrors God's grace to us.

The prodigal son (**Luke 15:11–24**).

- The father restores him with full sonship - robe, ring, feast.

These moments paint the heart of adoption: mercy, restoration, and welcome.

The Steadfast Love of the Lord never ceases...

- What does adoption say about who you are in reality?
- What lies or labels do you need to replace with God's truth?
- How does being an heir shape the way you see suffering, work, and the future?
- How can we remind each other to live like children of God, not slaves or orphans?

Identity

Pick one false identity ("I'm alone," "I'm not enough," "I'm a failure"). Replace it with Scripture: "You are God's child" (1 John 3:1).

Encourage

Tell another believer: "You have an inheritance. God is with you. You belong to Him."

Live

Walk as a son, not a slave.

Talk to God as Father.

Trust His care.

Rest in His promises.