

Doctrine of Christ

Adoption and Union

1. In his first epistle, John writes something which R. C. Sproul calls apostolic astonishment.
 - *1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*
2. John is telling the church that we must never take for granted the fact that we are children of God.
3. Liberal theology rejects this exclusive concept in light of the study of world religions, where all faiths are equally valid.
4. Comparative Religion became a new academic discipline during the 19th century. Anthropologist, sociologist, and theologians came together to compare other religions with Christianity to discern similarities between Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhist, and others.
5. The attempt was made to find out what basic elements all religions had in common.
6. It was decided that the essence of faith is found in two premises.
 - The Universal Fatherhood of God.
 - The Universal Brotherhood of man.
7. Neither of these concepts is taught in the Bible.
8. It is true that when Paul spoke in Athens he quoted one of their secular poets, but that does not mean that Paul embraced the concept of the universal Fatherhood of God.
 - *Acts 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.*
9. We are God's offspring in the sense that we are all created by God. However, the idea of the fatherhood of God is something that is a radical concept in Christianity.
10. Modern evangelism has united with secular humanism to endlessly assert that we are all God's children, and God is the Father of us all.

11. John sets forth, in amazement, a different idea. He is astonished enough to say, “Behold.”

- *1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

12. John was overwhelmed with that realization. He went on to affirm to say “we are the children of God.”

13. The question is raised as to why John would be astonished at being called a child of God, for in the Old Testament there are many passages that speak about God as Father in relation to His covenantal people.

- *Jeremiah 31:9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.*
- *Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.*
- *Isaiah 63:16 Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.*
- *Deuteronomy 32:6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?*
- *1 Chronicles 29:10 Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.*
- *Jeremiah 3:19 But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.*
- *Malachi 1:6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? Saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?*
- *Malachi 2:10 Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?*
- *Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

- *Psalms 103:13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.*

14. Not only is God Almighty known in Israel as Father, He calls His people, children.

- *Hosea 1:10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.*
- *Isaiah 1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.*
- *Exo 4:22,23 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.*
- *Deuteronomy 14:1 Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.*
- *Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.*
- *Psalms 82:6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.*

15. Despite the Scriptural references to God as Father, it has been noted that culturally, Jews were not accustomed to addressing God as Father.

16. Because of this, the Jewish religious leaders took notice when Jesus called God His Father, and opposed Him for speaking in such a familiar fashion.

- *John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

17. Equally astonishing to the disciples was the way Jesus taught them to pray.

- *Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

18. The very first word of the Lord's Prayer was radical beyond measure. Not only did Jesus address God as Father, He extended the privilege of addressing God as Father to His followers.

19. The privilege of calling God Father does have abusers. Paul Crouch (March 30, 1934 – November 30, 2013) taught people who watch his Trinity Broadcasting Network that any Christian who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit is as much the incarnation of God as Jesus.

20. Christians must not get carried away with being called the children of God. There is a unique privilege in Scriptural language that must not be lost.

21. Jesus, of course, is the true Son of God. God the Father affirmed this relationship.

- At His baptism. *Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*
- At His transfiguration. *Matthew 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*
- When speaking to some Greek men. *John 12:27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. 30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

22. The sonship of Christ to God is unique, and must be protected. Christ is by His very nature the Son of God. Christians are not sons of God by nature, but by adoption. Therein is the great difference.

23. People who are born, are born physically alive, and spiritually dead. We are the children of wrath.

- *Ephesians 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

24. The only person in the universe that can lay claim to being the Son of God inherently, or naturally, is Christ. Christ is the monogenes, or the only begotten of the Father.

- *John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

25. Christians are the children of God in another way.

- *John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

26. Christ gives those who believe in Christ the right, the power, and the authority to become the children of God. Extraordinary authority is given to every believer to become a child of God.
27. To be a child of God is a gift. It is something that is given. It is not something that is earned. It is not something that is received inherently at birth, or because a person is human.
28. The gift God gives is received by the Holy Spirit of adoption.
- *Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*
29. At the moment of salvation, God does not only give the believer peace, He brings the soul into a spiritual relationship with Himself through adoption.
30. The church is the family of God. There is One Father, and One Son, and all others are adopted. Christ is our Elder Brother. We have been made heirs of God.
- *Hebrews 2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*
 - *Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*
31. All that Christ receives, He shares with His brothers and sisters including His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation.
32. Adoption to God is real. We can distinguish between the natural Son of God, and the adopted children of God, but all are blessed.
33. In our adoption, the Christian enjoys the Mystical Union of the Believer with Christ.
34. This Mystical Union transcends the physical, but is made understandable by the Greek prepositions, en, and eis.
- The preposition en (in) means inside of.
 - The preposition eis (in) means into. The idea is that Christians are not just to believe that there is a person called Jesus, but are to believe into Christ.

Special Note.

Think of Christ in the form of a house, and you are on the outside. In order to get into the house, or into Christ, you have to go through a door. Once you are inside the house, once you are inside Christ, then you are in. The entering is the *eis*. Once inside, that is the, “*en*”.

Christians are told to believe into Christ.

Christians are told to believe in Christ, for He is in us. There is a spiritual union between every believer and Jesus.

There is also a spiritual union between every other Christian. If I am in Christ, and you are in Christ, then our union transcends our difficulties with one another.

35. All of this is the fruit of our adoption.