



Masters thesis

Adoption: exploring a neglected doctrine of salvation

Shek, J.

Full bibliographic citation: Shek, J. 2023. Adoption: exploring a neglected doctrine of salvation. Masters thesis Middlesex University / London School of Theology (LST)

Year: 2023

Publisher: Middlesex University Research Repository

Available online: <https://repository.mdx.ac.uk/item/110946>

Middlesex University Research Repository makes the University's research available electronically.

Copyright and moral rights to this work are retained by the author and/or other copyright owners unless otherwise stated. The work is supplied on the understanding that any use for commercial gain is strictly forbidden. A copy may be downloaded for personal, non-commercial, research or study without prior permission and without charge.

Works, including theses and research projects, may not be reproduced in any format or medium, or extensive quotations taken from them, or their content changed in any way, without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). They may not be sold or exploited commercially in any format or medium without the prior written permission of the copyright holder(s).

Full bibliographic details must be given when referring to, or quoting from full items including the author's name, the title of the work, publication details where relevant (place, publisher, date), pagination, and for theses or dissertations the awarding institution, the degree type awarded, and the date of the award.

If you believe that any material held in the repository infringes copyright law, please contact the Repository Team at Middlesex University via the following email address: repository@mdx.ac.uk

The item will be removed from the repository while any claim is being investigated.

See also repository copyright: re-use policy: <https://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/repository>

Adoption: Exploring a Neglected Doctrine of Salvation

**A Thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology**

by

Joshua Shek

Middlesex University

Supervised at London School of Theology

January 2023

Abstract

Joshua Shek, *Adoption: Exploring a Neglected Doctrine of Salvation*, MTh, Middlesex University/London School of Theology, 2023.

Advances in the study of the Christian doctrine of Adoption have provided new insights into its biblical foundation and systematic function as an organising metaphor of salvation. Despite a historical neglect and misunderstanding of the subject, contemporary debates now arise regarding Paul's cultural source behind his metaphor of adoption, or *huiiothesia*; whether humanity is created with an original relationship of sonship to God prior to the fall; and whether Christ himself was "adopted" by the Father at his resurrection, in order to make believers' adoption possible. Given that Christian believers often identify as "sons" or "daughters" of God in their spiritual identity, these doctrinal issues become crucial in our understanding of what grounds our spiritual-familial identity, and demand investigation into how adoption functions as an organising framework of salvation and faith using the language and context of family.

Through conducting a critical survey of existing knowledge on the doctrine of adoption, this paper assesses its historical development as a doctrinal concept, considers the cultural background of Paul's *huiiothesia* metaphor, and explores adoption in a systematic manner, considering its cosmological, soteriological, and eschatological implications. Further it will consider how adoption qualifies as a soteriological concept, and reflect on its place in a Reformed understanding of the ordered experience of salvation, or *ordo salutis*. In doing so, it presents the case for a synthetic, Roman-Jewish source behind Paul's concept of *huiiothesia*; argues in favour of the constitutive sonship of created humanity and for the concept of the qualitative, obedient-sonship of Christ, against the concept of his resurrection-adoption to make believers' adoption possible; and, finally, it presents adoption as a distinct and valuable organising concept of salvation, by showing how it possesses crucial soteriological markers, and suggests a union-with-Christ centric model of the *ordo salutis* with adoption as a primary benefit of salvation.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to my supervisors, Dr. Chris Steed and Dr. Matthew Knell, for their direction and encouragement over the course of this project. Their wise guidance has inspired me to remain curious yet dutiful in my research.

I also remain incredibly thankful for my family — my parents, and sisters — whose support and kindness has made this endeavour possible. As well as the many friends who have journeyed with me into research — their generosity, prayers, and messages of encouragement have provided much needed refreshment along the way.

Finally, I thank God, whose fatherly affection continues to comfort me, and whose gospel in Christ astounds me with how richly powerfully it is to bring many spiritual children home.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in accordance with the SBL Handbook of Style. Unless otherwise stated, all scripture references taken from the English Standard Version.

BST	The Bible Speaks Today
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>

Table of Contents

Introduction: Adoption - The Neglected Child of Systematic Studies	1
1. Historical Engagement with Adoption	3
1.1. Past Explorations	3
1.1.1. Patristics on Adoption — Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, and Aquinas	3
1.1.2. Reformers on Adoption — Calvin, and the Puritans	8
1.2. Towards a Mature Doctrine of Adoption	12
2. Adoption — Familial Transformation in Pauline Soteriology	13
2.1. Huiiothesia — A Pauline Synthesis	13
2.1.1. Huiiothesia — Identifying its Cultural Heritage	14
2.1.2. Roman Influence	15
2.1.3. Greek Influence	18
2.1.4. Jewish Influence	19
2.1.5. υἱοθεσία — A Synthetic Approach	21
2.2. Pauline Adoption — From Protology to Eschatology	23
2.2.1. Predestined for Adoption — Ephesians 1:3-5	24
2.2.2. To Them Belongs the Adoption — Romans 9:4-5	25
2.2.3. The Adoption as Sons — Galatians 4:4-7	27
2.2.4. The Spirit of Adoption — Romans 8:15-16	30
2.2.5. Waiting Eagerly for Adoption — Romans 8:22-23	33
2.3. Adoption — A Pauline Metaphor of Salvation	35
3. A Soteriology of Adoption	39
3.1. The Cosmology of Adoption	39
3.1.1. The Sonship of the First Adam	39
3.1.2. Hamartiology of Adoption — The Disobedience of the Created Son	43
3.1.3. The Pre-Adoptive State — The Enslavement of Adam’s Descendants	45

3.2. The Soteriology of Adoption — Salvation through Trinitarian Relationality	47
3.2.1. Huiiothesia — Trinitarian Relationality	47
3.2.2. Adoption Paterology — The Father of A New Family	49
3.2.3. Adoption Christology — Christ The Obedient Son	51
3.2.4. Adoption Pneumatology — The Spirit of Adoption	63
3.3. The Eschatology of Adoption — Glorified Sons and Heirs of God	67
4. Adoption — Its Soteriological Qualification and the Ordo Salutis	70
4.1. Qualifying Adoption as An Organising Framework of Salvation	70
4.2. Adoption in the Ordo Salutis	72
Conclusions	79
Bibliography	81

Introduction: Adoption - The Neglected Child of Systematic Studies

When Christians consider their spiritual salvation rarely does the concept of adoption form part of our soteriological awareness. Within traditional New Testament scholarship other Pauline concepts such as justification, redemption, and propitiation are perceived as more important.¹ Yet when Christians reflect on their spiritual *identity* the usual articulation reflects an awareness of one's sonship² to God, our Heavenly Father. Familial analogies take precedence in our awareness of our transformed relationship to God, but the soteriological analogies that the church has predominantly circulated generally exist in conceptually non-familial contexts. In contrast, the doctrine of adoption — whereby God adopts believers into his family, and makes them his sons and daughters — presents a metaphor of salvation that is replete with relational significance, and possesses great potential to ground our conscious, familial ontology, on a, currently subconscious, familial soteriology.

Despite its soteriologically enriching potential the doctrine of adoption has suffered much neglect in the past. Writing in 1988, J. I. Packer considered that adoption accords 'the highest privilege that the gospel offers: higher even than justification,'³ but lamented, 'it is a strange fact [then] that the truth of adoption has been little regarded in Christian history. Apart from two nineteenth-century books ... there is no evangelical writing on it, nor has there been at any time since the Reformation.'⁴ Prior to this, in 1923 Whaling observed, 'A complete and well-rounded, and systematic presentation of the Biblical meaning of *υιοθεσία* [adoption] ... is still a desideration.'⁵ Indeed, recent investigation by Grudem into 17 comprehensive systematic works produced by Evangelical and Roman Catholic scholars found adoption lacking in both scope and depth in almost all the works surveyed.⁶

¹ Burke, *Family*, 37.

² When we use the term "sonship" in this paper we refer to both male and female believers in their filial relationship to God, and in no way mean to exclude females from the doctrinal applicability. In principle, we use adoption in agreement with Hodge's reading of Paul where he elects to use the term *huiothesia* specifically because of the Greco-Roman concept of adoption which implied full status of membership into the new family. 'Paul assumed that all the baptized gentiles, whether slaves, free, male, or female, would have appropriated the status of heir for themselves. ... Paul sees God as extending the patriarchal privilege of sons to all gentiles-in-Christ, including women and slaves of both genders.' Hodge, *Sons*, 69. See also: Scott, 'Sonship,' 18.

³ Packer, *God*, 232.

⁴ Packer, *God*, 258.

⁵ Whaling, 'Adoption,' 235. c.f. Crawford, *Fatherhood*, 1.

⁶ Grudem, *Theology*, 736-44.

However, more recent scholarship is now developing adoption towards a more robust systematic articulation.⁷ Drawing from scholarship into the Pauline background and cultural meaning of the term *υιοθεσία*, studies have considered how adoption is achieved as a wholly Trinitarian work, and reflect on key issues such as the universal Fatherhood of God to humanity, and whether Christ himself was adopted at his resurrection as a necessary step in making adoption available to believers.

This paper, then, intends to consider adoption as a soteriological construct within atonement theory. Our thesis is that against a historical background of soteriological neglect and undervalue as a model of atonement, the concept of believers' adoption, informed by a Pauline understanding of believers' *huiiothesia*, can instead be shown to verifiably provide a valuable and enriching concept of atonement that satisfactorily articulates believers' salvation within the thematic scope of family relationships. By the end of this paper we will have argued for adoption's validity and particular contribution as an organising principle of atonement by investigating its specific ability to both explain the problem of human sin, and articulate a gospel solution. In pursuit of this aim we will, firstly, in section 1, conduct a brief survey of adoption's historical neglect and misconceptions as a soteriological concept, highlighting the need for a more robust construction of adoption. Then, in section 2, we will consider adoption's function as a Pauline metaphor of salvation by identifying the likely source of his *υιοθεσία* concept as a synthesised Jewish-Roman understanding of *υιοθεσία*, thus framing the biblical context and content of Pauline adoption. In section 3, we will then proceed to consider adoption in its soteriological construction, considering: the pre-fall, and pre-adoptive relationship of humanity to God, arguing for the constitutive sonship of all humans, and their universal enslavement because of the fall; the work of each of the Trinitarian persons in providing soteriological adoption to believers, with particular focus on Christological issues such as Christ's own filial nature in his incarnation and resurrection states; and the eschatological implications of a doctrine of adoption. In section 4, having explored adoption's soteriological contributions, we will finally consider adoption's qualification as an organising framework of salvation, and present a model of the *ordo salutis* that identifies adoption as one of the primary benefits of salvation through union with Christ.

⁷ Beeke observes a 'burst of evangelical writings on adoption' during the twentieth century. Beeke, *Heirs*, loc. 103. Coolman also notes increasing interest. Coolman, 'Goods,' 96.

1. Historical Engagement with Adoption

As we begin our exploration of the doctrine of adoption we wish to first investigate how historical thinkers have reflected on the concept. What doctrinal function was adoption been invested with prior to modern developments, and how do these earlier investigations provide us with foundational questions as we attempt to determine adoption's soteriological qualification? By first assessing adoption's early underdevelopment we may then explore a biblical theology of Pauline adoption that responds to these early deficiencies, and lays the groundwork for a more systematic articulation of the doctrine.

1.1. Past Explorations

Historically, adoption has suffered much neglect as a concept of Christian faith, often being relegated to the status of secondary benefit, or absorbed into other soteriological or pastoral concepts as a complementary function or benefit. Prior to more contemporary interest in adoption studies, the concept was underdeveloped and comprehensively explored as a singular subject. Nonetheless, as we begin our critical survey of a doctrine of adoption we first consider how these historical reflections on adoption, whilst limited, have nonetheless provided the basis for contemporary investigation into the doctrine.

1.1.1. Patristics on Adoption — Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, and Aquinas

1.1.1.1. *Irenaeus*

Irenaeus was the earliest of the Patristic Fathers to reflect on the nature and function of adoption. However, his doctrinal exploration is scattered and brief. In *Against Heresies*, he states that God 'by Himself bestows on all just men, the adoption of sons to the Father, which is eternal life.'⁸ In so doing, Irenaeus attributes to adoption its soteriological foundation, and establishes its Trinitarian root — Paterologically, it is the Father himself who initiates and bestows this sonship through adoption.⁹ Christologically, he then considers, 'how could we be partakers of His adoption of sons, had we not received from Him by the Son, the Communion which is with Him; had not His Word made Flesh, come into Communion with us?'¹⁰ Thus, Christ's incarnation has the function of being the basis of the believer's union to The Son of God in order to make adoption into sonship

⁸ Irenaeus, *Books*, 117. *Against Heresies* 2.11.1

⁹ Irenaeus, *Demonstration*, 76.

¹⁰ Irenaeus, *Books*, 280.

possible.¹¹ Pneumatologically, however, the Spirit is stated as being granted as the means of believers adoption, which itself is intended to result in a 'birth.'¹² Thus, Irenaeus' concept of adoption is tied to the idea of regeneration. In *Against Heresies* 3.19.1, he expands,

And how could we be united to incorruption and immortality, without Incorruption and Immortality being first made that which we are? That the corruptible might be swallowed up by Incorruption, and the mortal by Immortality; that we might receive the adoption of Sons.¹³

Lawson observes that these concepts of "incorruptibility," and "immortality" are, elsewhere for Irenaeus, used to describe how believers participate in the divine life, and results in his conclusion that adoption functions not in distinction, but as partly representing what Irenaeus otherwise understands as this "divinisation" of believers.¹⁴ Irenaeus, then, by conflating adoption with regeneration, and subsuming it under the higher function of the believer's divinisation, renders it not so much as a soteriological concept of grace, but one whereby believers can work towards the maintenance of their salvation. Does adoptive sonship only function as a concept of sanctification, then, or has Irenaeus missed identifying its soteriological nature?

1.1.1.2. *Origen*

Peppard notes that Origen, like Irenaeus, was influenced by both the Pauline image of adoption, as well as the Johannine image of regeneration.¹⁵ The result being that Origen's understanding of adoption appears to function more as a concept of Christian growth, alongside regeneration, than specifically as a distinct soteriological device.¹⁶ This nature of adoption, in Origen's mind as co-functioning with regeneration in the ongoing sanctification of the believer, is further evidenced by Origen's teaching on prayer. In speculating how Christ might have taught believers to pray based on their transformed relationship through adoption, Origen writes, 'Learn therefore how great a gift you have received from my Father, having "received" through regeneration in me "the spirit of

¹¹ Briggman observes, 'Irenaeus grounds the salvific union of each believer upon the Christological union. ... the Word of God became man so that human beings might become children of God.' Briggman, *God*, 184.

¹² Irenaeus, *Books*, 492. *Against Heresies* 5.18.2. Payton's translation here renders "regeneration." Payton, *Irenaeus*, 170.

¹³ Irenaeus, *Books*, 282. *Against Heresies* 3.19.1.

¹⁴ Lawson, *Theology*, 157.

¹⁵ Peppard, *Son*, 162.

¹⁶ Stibbe suggests this is due to a Platonic influence on Origen's theology. Stibbe, *Orphans*, 89.

adoption," that you may be called "sons of God."¹⁷ Widdecombe observes that Origen means believers can only call God their Father if they continue to live sinless lives.¹⁸ For Origen, then, adoption possibly functions more significantly as foundational for understanding the life of the believer *as* a son of God, and less significantly as the means by which we enter *into* sonship. If so, this reflects Irenaeus' concept of adoption as foundational to the divinisation of believers, through which obedient sonship is how believers could attain their salvation.

However, another important question Origen raises is whether Christ's own filial relationship to the Father differs in nature to the believer's sonship by adoption. Widdecombe notes, from Origen, that

the name "sons by adoption" stands in contrast to that of "son by nature," ... when one receives the Son, one does not first possess the Son and then make room for the "spirit of adoption"; rather, the "adoption as sons comes into" (*ἐπεισέρχεται*) us through Christ. The whole of the process by which we become sons is grounded in the Son who is Son by nature.¹⁹

Ostensibly, the essence of the believer's sonship is the same as that of Christ's, albeit granted through the reception of the Spirit rather than by nature. This of course raises an issue: how can believers possess Christ's own sonship when his is by eternal generation, and ours is only by spiritual adoption? Clearly, further investigation is required to differentiate their sonship from Christ's.

1.1.1.3. Athanasius

Athanasius, in his *Contra Arianos*, describes the believer's transition into sonship to God as, 'From the beginning we are creatures by nature and God is our creator through the Word, but afterwards we are made sons (*υἱοποιούμεθα*) and henceforth God the creator becomes our Father also.'²⁰ Thus, Athanasius attempts to locate the relational status of believers to God prior to their adoption, identifying us neither sons nor slaves, but as "creatures." This begs the question, "Do humans possess any filial relationship to God at all prior to the fall?" and, if so, "Does this familial status undergo any change as a result of the fall?" Athanasius provides an allusion to an answer when he later states that Christ, 'saves us from the "bondage of corruption" and "brings adoption and deliverance" ... so that henceforth we

¹⁷ Oulton, *Christianity*, 271.

¹⁸ Widdecombe, *Fatherhood*, 103.

¹⁹ Widdecombe, *Fatherhood*, 98-9.

²⁰ Widdecombe, *Fatherhood*, 229.

would be “made sons in him.”²¹ It appears that, having been made as “creatures,” humanity falls into bondage and slavery to sin, and requiring adoption unto sonship. Whilst a helpful start, clearly the issue requires further deliberation.

Where Athanasius develops a doctrine of adoption more significantly, however, is in giving it a soteriological focus. As Widdecombe observes, for Athanasius it is ‘the Son's assumption of humanity that allows us to become sons by adoption and so to be able to address God as Father.’²² Thus, Athanasius’ work to counter Arianism contributes to an understanding of adoption that requires Christ to first be incarnate as a human in order to make salvation by adoption a possibility. However, this concept of salvation-adoption appears to then locate believers’ adoption not in the cross of Christ, but strictly in his incarnation. Earlier in *Contra Arianos*, Athanasius states Jesus ‘has made us sons with the Father and divinized men by himself becoming man.’²³ It appears, then, that whilst Athanasius indeed identified adoption as a soteriological motif, he, like Irenaeus and Origen, ultimately renders adoption as a process of divinisation, and grounded upon Christ's incarnation rather than his crucifixion.²⁴ By emphasising the divinity of Christ, in protest against Arianism, Athanasius rightly asserted the divinity of Christ as the incarnate Son of God, but neglects to connect believers’ adoption to the life or death of Christ. His efforts, however, helpfully raise another question: is the believer’s adoptive-sonship grounded upon Christ’s incarnate sonship? Further, are believers adopted by God, or only adopted by the Father, the First Person of the Trinity?

1.1.1.4. Aquinas

In his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas distinctly explores the doctrine of ‘The Adoption of Sons,’²⁵ within which he posits two critical questions. First, can God adopt believers since he is already father to all? To which, he answers, yes, since the adoption received is one of grace rather than one by nature.²⁶ Second, who is it specifically that adopts believers? Is it the whole Trinity, or just the Father? To which he responds, is it the Trinity, since “Father”

²¹ Widdecombe, *Fatherhood*, 230-1.

²² Widdecombe, *Fatherhood*, 230.

²³ Widdecombe, *Fatherhood*, 231.

²⁴ Athanasius provides more indications of this position when he states, ‘in the Christ we are all made alive, the flesh being no longer earthly, but henceforth being adopted as word (*λογωίσης*), through God's Word, who became flesh for us.’ Widdecombe, *Fatherhood*, 237.

²⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part 3a, Q. 23.

²⁶ Aquinas, ‘Question 23,’ 159.

is merely a title to refer to the entire Godhead.²⁷ Aquinas then explains the distinct work of each of the Trinitarian person in adoption: 'Accordingly, adoption, while it is common to the whole Trinity, is appropriated to the Father as its author, to the Son as its model, to the Holy Spirit as the Person who imparts to us the likeness of this model.'²⁸ Aquinas' system is insightful for us here, not in the least because it provides the basis to develop a truly Trinitarian doctrine of adoption, but also because it grounds believers' adoptive-sonship not on Christ's nature of eternal begotten-ness, but on his *modelling* of sonship which itself is imparted by the Spirit. In other words, it is Christ's filial *quality* that is imparted to the believer and saves them.

One could argue here that it is not Christ's filial quality that is imparted, but rather his own "adoption" as the Son of God. In response, Aquinas considers if Christ needed to be adopted himself, in any way, in order to make possible the adoptive sonship of believers. He concludes that,

Sonship, strictly speaking, affects the person or hypostasis of an individual, not simply his nature. ... In Christ, however, there is only one person or hypostasis and this is the uncreated Person who is by nature the Son of God. ... Consequently, since Christ is the Son of God by nature, under no aspect may he be said to be an adoptive son.²⁹

Whilst Aquinas helpfully clarifies here that Christ was not himself adopted in order to make adoption available to believers, we are still left with the question of Christ's relationship to the Father in respect to his *human* nature — Does the human Christ possess a sonship to God by virtue of his hypostatic union to his eternally begotten sonship? Aquinas responds,

The first person of the Blessed Trinity is Father of Christ by natural generation and this is a personal characteristic of his; but he is our Father in virtue of a freely willed action, and this is something which is common to him, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. And for this reason Christ is not a son of the whole Trinity as we are.³⁰

Aquinas, thus, differentiates Christ's particular human sonship as being derived from his eternal sonship,³¹ and the rest of humanity's sonship as being derived from the whole

²⁷ Aquinas, 'Question 23,' 163. Glenn, 'Adoption.' Emery further explores the various ways that Aquinas understood that God as "Father" can be applied. Emery, *Theology*, 162.

²⁸ Aquinas, 'Question,' 165.

²⁹ Aquinas, 'Question,' 169.

³⁰ Aquinas, 'Question,' 163.

³¹ Emery, *Theology*, 165.

Trinity's creation and adoption of them.³² Aquinas' position is problematic for us since, if the efficient cause of the believer's adoption is grounded upon the relationship of the eternal Son's sonship to the eternal Father, then what necessitates Christ's achievement of redemption in his earthly life to provide grounds for believers to identify with in his filial status? Does not Christ, in his earthly "sonship," need to demonstrate filial *obedience* in order to avail salvation, through adoption, to believers? Is Christ's sonship, then, on one hand, begotten in regards to his divinity, and, on the other hand, by qualitative, filial obedience, or can his sonship be both eternally begotten, and also constituted through his humanity and in need of qualification through obedience?

1.1.2. Reformers on Adoption — Calvin, and the Puritans

1.1.2.1. Calvin

Of all the Reformed writers on adoption, Calvin is sometimes regarded as the most cognisant of the concept and employs it as an underlying framework within his systematic and pastoral theology.³³ However, it is revealing that, in the entire of his *Institutes*, Calvin does not dedicate a distinct section to the explanation of the doctrine,³⁴ and only refers to the concept in thirteen principal occasions.³⁵ Interrogating his work reveals occasions which shows his awareness of believers' sonship and adoption was present as a theme, but on closer reading demonstrates that he did not in fact view it as an overarching framework of his soteriology, and simply as a significant benefit of salvation.³⁶ Nevertheless, what significant contributions or issues does Calvin bring to our attention?

On one occasion in *Institutes*, Calvin asserts that humanity could not enter into the sonship of the Father except by way of adoption in Christ: 'to neither angels nor men was God ever Father, except with regard to his only-begotten Son; and men ... become God's sons by free adoption because Christ is the Son of God by nature. ... they could not actually be sons of God unless their adoption was founded — upon the Head.'³⁷ Yet, immediately after, humanity

³² Emery, *Theology*, 163.

³³ Trumper describes Calvin as the 'theologian of adoption *par excellence*.' Trumper, 'History (II),' 198. For detailed investigations into Calvin's theology of adoption, see: Trumper, 'Historical.' Westhead, 'Adoption.' Dewalt, 'Practical.' Griffith, 'Title.'

³⁴ Trumper, 'Import (I),' 104. McKinley, 'Relation,' 100. Ferguson, 'Doctrine,' 82. Tse, *Assurance*, 18.

³⁵ Calvin, *Institutes (I.I)*, 555, fn. 25.

³⁶ Wilkinson's recent work argues against the supposition that Calvin held adoption as an overarching theme, contending 'union with Christ being the actual controlling principle of Calvin's soteriology.' Wilkinson, 'Adoption,' 57.

³⁷ Calvin, *Institutes (I.I)*, 488.

is described as children of God, constitutionally, by virtue of their being created by him: 'At their creation angels and men were so constituted that God was their common Father.'³⁸ Whilst this juxtaposition is jarring, it evidences Calvin's awareness of the seeming duality of human sonship to God, one constitutional, and the other adoptive. Westhead attempts to rectify Calvin's tension by distinguishing the nature of the two sonships when he comments,

the prelapsarian relationship of humanity to God is only "in a certain sense" to be construed in terms of sonship, and such restraint on Calvin's behalf with regard to "creative" sonship alerts us to the possibility of there being a fuller, more certain and fundamental sense in which the notion of sonship is to be conceived.³⁹

This, in Westhead's opinion, allows Calvin to view adoptive-sonship as being so qualitatively superior to creative sonship that he does not consider the latter to be truly sonship.⁴⁰

However, Calvin explains this nature of believers' adoptive sonship when he writes,

With what confidence would anyone address God as "Father"? Who would break forth into such rashness as to claim for himself the honor of a son of God unless we had been adopted as children of grace in Christ? He, while he is the true Son, has of himself been given us as a brother that *what he has of his own by nature may become ours by benefit of adoption* if we embrace this great blessing with sure faith.⁴¹

Thus, Calvin locates the believer's sonship in the natural sonship of Christ, albeit given to them through adoption in faith.⁴² We see, then, how Calvin's thinking on adoption was certainly present, but unrefined. His confusion of the constitutive and adoptive sonship of believers requires explanation, and his basing the sonship of believers on the eternal nature of sonship of Christ seems to neglect any attempt to differentiate between Christ's distinct Sonship in eternity, and whatever nature of sonship he may have possessed in his humanity. Here we must ask, did Christ possess a dual-sonship of sorts — one divine, and one human? And to what nature of sonship are believers brought into by adoption?

³⁸ Calvin, *Institutes (I.I)*, 489.

³⁹ Westhead, *Adoption*, 103.

⁴⁰ Westhead, *Adoption*, 104.

⁴¹ Calvin, *Institutes (III.XX)*, 899. Emphasis mine.

⁴² Griffith also notes that Calvin understands Christ's incarnation as his means of showing solidarity with humanity so that believers could be adopted into sonship of the same nature. Griffith, 'First,' 137.

Elsewhere, Calvin locates adoption in a biblical theology of covenant. In an attempt to demonstrate the similarity between the old and new covenants, Calvin connects the Hebrew's hope for future glory, with the Gentile invitation to possess the identical gift through the same process of adoption. He states that the Israelites 'were adopted into the hope of immortality; and assurance of this adoption was certified to them by oracles, by the law, and by the prophets.'⁴³ Significantly, this allows Calvin to identify OT sonship in NT terms. As Westhead notes, "The covenant with the Jews for instance, he calls "the covenant of adoption" (*Institutes* 3:2:22), and the even older covenant with Abraham is one which consisted in "receiving by free adoption as sons those who were enemies" (*Institutes* 1:10:1).'⁴⁴ The logic provided by Calvin here is that OT sonship *is* NT sonship, and, thus, the Israelite adoption *is* the believer's adoption. The two covenants, for Calvin, are united in their ends, but differ in their means.⁴⁵ Calvin, thus, helpfully locates adoption as a soteriological motif in the schema of covenant, finding that OT promises are met in NT fulfilments. What is the nature of Israel's adoption, then, and how does this translate to believers' adoption?

Regardless of whether Calvin held a distinct and developed doctrine of adoption in his mind, his scattered dogma on the subject is helpful in establishing some foundational questions for to our investigation. However, in his overall theology Calvin appears to relegate adoption as a supporting theme to his principal focus on union with Christ. Indeed, in Calvin's schema it would appear that he locates adoption as being contingent upon regeneration as a means of filial establishment, and, together, they act as the benefit of one's union with Christ.⁴⁶ His theology of adoption, thus, relies upon regeneration in order to provide the means by which the sons and daughters of God may be equipped to now obey their divine father; as the Spirit grants the adopted freedom from bondage to sin,⁴⁷ so, for Calvin, adoption is a forensic act that finds its relational particularisation through spiritual regeneration.⁴⁸ Calvin's conflation of adoption with regeneration, then,

⁴³ Calvin, *Institutes (I.I)*, 429.

⁴⁴ Westhead, 'Adoption,' 108.

⁴⁵ 'The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation.' Calvin, *Institutes (I.I)*, 429. Stetina, *Fatherhood*, 66.

⁴⁶ Trumper, 'Historical,' 160.

⁴⁷ Trumper, 'Historical,' 164.

⁴⁸ Trumper ultimately qualifies his reading of Calvin, 'It is because the adopted son or daughter has been born anew that the adoptive state can be enjoyed. Calvin therefore subsumes the adoptive state under regeneration so making it possible to speak of the *life* of sonship.' Trumper, 'Historical,' 161. Emphasis original.

leaves us with another question: how does adoption actually relate to other metaphors of salvation? Where should adoption be located in the reformed *ordo salutis*?

1.1.2.2. Puritan - Westminster Confession of Faith

Whilst other Reformation period writers mostly neglected to explore the doctrine of adoption, Presbyterian thinkers were insightful enough to include it in their creedal assertions.⁴⁹ The Westminster Confession of Faith states in its 12th chapter:

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, 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.⁵⁰

What is immediately clear here is the brevity of the catechism's explanation of adoption, especially when compared to other doctrines regarding salvation.⁵¹ Also striking is the premise that adoption is a consequence of justification — Adoption into sonship has its benefits of access to and intimacy with God, but is not categorically soteriological in its nature, and, instead, follows justification. This subsuming of adoption under justification subsequently rendered their teaching on adoption notably forensic in its substance,⁵² and failed to more fully emphasise the familial and relational aspects of membership in the family of God.⁵³

Despite its brevity, the Westminster Confessions provided the first substantial confessional expression of a doctrine of adoption,⁵⁴ and gave adoption a forensic aspect to its instinctive, relational nature. But this development raises one final set of questions for us: is adoption principally a forensic concept, and rightly to be subsumed as a consequence of justification, or does adoption maintain a relationally transformative function as a

⁴⁹ Milton surmises that it was the Puritan's 'experiential' character of faith that led them to integrate adoption in their doctrinal development. Milton, *Doctrine*, 25.

⁵⁰ Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 12. Similar statements in the Shorter Catechism Q34, and Longer Catechism Q74.

⁵¹ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 286. Beeke notes that the Presbyterians did not substantially address the concept of adoption. Beeke, *Heirs*, loc. 1490.

⁵² Packer, *God*, 258.

⁵³ Beeke, *Heirs*, loc. 583. Trumper notes that other Presbyterian thinkers did reflect more fully on adoption, but these explorations remained limited. Trumper, 'Historical,' 21.

⁵⁴ Kelly, 'Adoption,' 111.

soteriological device? How should a Reformed *ordo salutis* reflect adoption's true place in the outworking of salvation in the believer's life?

1.2. Towards a Mature Doctrine of Adoption

Having investigated some early reflections on adoption, it becomes clear that the doctrine had suffered neglect, and its proponents failed to fully articulate how adoption functions as a soteriological concept, instead often relegating as a function of sanctification; conflating or absorbing into other concepts such as regeneration or justification; or simply under-developing its soteriological premise. Despite our identification of several lines of inquiry into a wider rationale and articulation of adoption, many of these questions remained essentially unexplored by earlier thinkers. In explaining this peculiarity, Garner suggests Girardeau's observation that,

through intense battles for theological truth, "the church's knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, of sin, and of justification has been cleared up, matured, and crystallized." This clarification, maturation, and crystallization have protected fundamental doctrines from heresy, and preserved the integrity of the Christian faith for generations. Adoption has had no such bloodstained history. It is likely for this reason ... that adoption has found itself principally deserted.⁵⁵

We would agree with this perceived lack of theological urgency in the context of soteriological studies, and wish to further suggest that adoption's neglect is also partly due to a perception of adoption as a pastoral construct, rather than a principally soteriological one due to its familial language and context. Such is the focus of historical interest towards more abstract and, we would suggest, individualistic motifs of soteriology that even many contemporary thinkers continue to remain unaware of its soteriological value.⁵⁶ Having established the need, from historical foundations, to move towards a more robust and deeper articulation of adoption, we must ask how has contemporary scholarship engaged with adoption's past conundrums? In order to better equip ourselves for that exploration, we must first grasp a biblical theology of adoption as Paul understood and applied the motif. It is to investigating a biblical theology of adoption that we now turn.

⁵⁵ Garner, *Sons*, 30.

⁵⁶ Guthrie, Thiessen, and McIntyre provide three prominent examples of how more recent explorations of soteriology reflect on many other atonement motifs, but not adoption. Guthrie, *Doctrine*. Thiessen, *Lectures*, 278-282. McIntyre, *Shape*, 26-52.

2. Adoption — Familial Transformation in Pauline Soteriology

Having briefly considered some of the main developments and highlighted the key doctrinal issues raised by historical studies on adoption, we now move to consider adoption in its biblical foundations. What informs Paul's adoption metaphor, and how does a biblical construction of *huiiothesia* begin to respond to the historical questions raised by early thinkers regarding adoption's nature and potential value as a distinct soteriological concept?

Paul uses the term *υιοθεσία* (*huiiothesia*) a total of five times in three of his letters (Rom. 8:15; 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), and is alone in his usage of the term.⁵⁷ Studies into Paul's background of *huiiothesia* have so far precipitated conflicting conclusions with scholars arguing for a Greco-Roman source, Jewish source, or for a dual source.⁵⁸ What was the likely cultural background of Paul's adoption motif?

2.1. *Huiiothesia* — A Pauline Synthesis

The main obstacle in extrapolating a Pauline theology of adoption is discerning the cultural background behind his *huiiothesia* concept. The immediate complication lies in the fact that conceptualisations and practices of adoption were present in all three cultures within Paul's audience. So, should we attempt to identify the likely contextual source(s) underpinning Paul's *huiiothesia* term before then reading the pertinent passages, or should one elect to discern a specific meaning of *huiiothesia* by investigating the wider textual data for Paul's intentions first, before then overlaying these conceptual markers over the cultural understandings in order to identify the most likely source? Ideally, a balanced literary-contextual approach considering both Paul's cultural background, and his biblical theology in dialogue with each other would allow evidence from both perspectives to provide a mutually balanced assessment. However, given the limited occurrences of the *huiiothesia* term, it seems prudent to begin by assessing the relative wealth of contextual evidence in order to determine *huiiothesia*'s likely semantic emphasis.

⁵⁷ Trumper argues for the significance of Paul only electing to use the term a total of five times as a sign of its import. Trumper, 'Import (II)', 103-4.

⁵⁸ Kim, 'Adoption,' 133. Supplementing Kim's findings, proponents of a Greco-Roman source include Dunn, Lyall, Loane, Tse, Box, Best, Ryrie, Davids, Stibbe, Wanamaker, and Peppard. Proponents for a Jewish source include Rossell, Moo, Scott, Cook, and Theron. And proponents for a dual source include Burke, Byrne, Ferguson, Watson, and Trumper.

2.1.1. *Huiothesia* — Identifying its Cultural Heritage

Milton notes the term *huiothesia* is a ‘compound of the Greek word *huios*, “son,” and the word *titheœmi*, “to place.” Adoption is therefore ... “the placing of a son, or child, into a welcoming family.”⁵⁹ Does *huiothesia*, then, mean the process of “adoption” or simply the status of “sonship?”⁶⁰ According to Scott’s in-depth study *huiothesia* always means ‘the process or the state of being adopted as son(s).’⁶¹ Burke adds, ‘adoption is a family term that in the ancient social world of Paul’s day denoted many things, but above everything else it signified the transfer of a son (usually an adult) as he is taken out of one family and placed in another.’⁶² Whilst *huiothesia*, in this meaning, is consistent across ancient Greek, Roman, and Jewish contexts, the precise manner of transfer, the relative status of sonship, and resulting privileges and responsibilities in each context, are all far from similar.

Scott notes the risk of presuming a Greek background just because the term is written in Greek.⁶³ Burke alternatively highlights that Paul only uses the term in letters written to audiences in Roman provinces,⁶⁴ and, as a Roman citizen himself, ‘it is likely that adoption was a term Paul took from his own social context.’⁶⁵ Other scholars judge that a lack of a legal concept of adoption in Jewish law meant that Paul must have borrowed from his Greco-Roman background, and yet some of these voices argue that Paul picked *huiothesia* based on his Israelite appreciation of the Hebrew’s ethnic identification as the “adopted” sons of God.⁶⁶ Thus, as Garner suggests, “The question is not whether Paul chose the term because of its common usage, but rather what points of analogy he employs in order to express the grand filial facts of redemption.”⁶⁷ How does each context — Roman, Greek, and Jewish — understand *huiothesia*? What can we distinguish regarding their motivations

⁵⁹ Milton, *Doctrine*, 7. Garner notes that the term possesses both ‘sovereign (*τίθημι*) and familial dimensions (*υἱός*).’ Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 2.

⁶⁰ Byrne suggests the possibility of both being feasible. Byrne, *Sons*, 80.

⁶¹ Scott, ‘Sonship,’ 16. Further, Trumper notes that “‘Sonship’ ... does not convey the total idea behind the word. In Paul’s teaching the Christian’s sonship is dependent on his adoption.’ Trumper, ‘Import (I),’ 132. Erin Heim also considers the lexical background of *υἱοθεσία*, noting, ‘the practice of adoption was part of the social and cultural consciousness in the first century, which leads to the sure conclusion that *υἱοθεσία* was a term designating “adoption” ... rather than the more general “sonship.”’ Heim, ‘Light,’ 113.

⁶² Burke, *Family*, 40.

⁶³ Scott, *Sons*, 267. Emphasis original.

⁶⁴ Burke, *Family*, 61.

⁶⁵ Burke, *Family*, 45.

⁶⁶ Stibbe, *Orphans*, 29.

⁶⁷ Garner, *Sons*, 208-9. Emphasis original.

for adoption, the implementation of adoption in practice, and the resultant status of sonship that was granted by each culture?

2.1.2. Roman Influence

The fact that all five occurrences of *huiiothesia* only appear in letters to Roman communities,⁶⁸ three of which are to the church in Rome itself, and the fact that Paul himself was a Roman citizen trained in law,⁶⁹ gives us cause to inspect the Roman background first.

Roman motivations for adoption were generally concerned with maintaining the family line, estate, and *cultus*.⁷⁰ In Roman society it was the role of the head male to act as the *paterfamilias* of the family. Heim notes,

the primary responsibility of the *paterfamilias* was the management of the estate's goods. This role required the *paterfamilias* to ensure the preservation of the family's wealth, status, honor, and cult. Adoption provided the *paterfamilias* with an avenue to preserve the family's inheritable goods through the exercise of his *potestas* to make a son for himself by decree.⁷¹

We see here, then, an adoption concept where the concern is not principally for the welfare of the adoptee, but for the welfare and continuation of the adopting family's legacy.

Scholars identify two main legal devices for adoption in Roman law: *adoptio* was applied to someone under the *paterfamilias* of another, whilst *adrogatio* was applied to a person that was a family head themselves.⁷² Heim explains that *adrogatio*:

involved the adoption of one *paterfamilias* by another, it meant that the adoptee surrendered his *potestas* over his inheritable goods (wealth, family, honor, and cult) and came under the *potestas* of his adopted *paterfamilias*.⁷³

⁶⁸ Burke, 'Sons,' 266.

⁶⁹ Lyall, *Slaves*, 96.

⁷⁰ Garner, *Family*, 114. Lyall, *Slaves*, 69. Scott notes that Roman adoption was for the 'perpetuation of the *nomen*, the *pecunia*, and the *sacrum* of the new family.' Scott, *Sons*, 12.

⁷¹ Heim, 'Light,' 131.

⁷² Berger, 'Adoption,' 13. c.f. Pope, *Compendium*, 502. Gardner, *Family*, 117.

⁷³ Heim, 'Light,' 132-3. c.f. Lyall, *Slaves*, 84-5. Scott, *Sons*, 10.

As such, *adrogatio* essentially destroyed the previous familial line and subsumed all of the members of the family under the adopted *paterfamilias* into the new family, and under a new *potestas*.

Adoptio, however, simply replaced the paternal *potestas* over an individual to their new adoptive father, and did not require public approval.⁷⁴ Heim again explains:

In contrast, *adoptio* was a private transaction between the natural *paterfamilias* and the adoptive *paterfamilias* of a son who was *homo alieni iuris*. The procedure for *adoptio* involved the natural *paterfamilias* selling his son into slavery to another party three times, and having the other party manumit the son after each time he was sold. Roman law returned sons to the authority of the *paterfamilias* the first two times they were manumitted, but after the third sale the father's *potestas* over his son was broken. Once the natural father's *potestas* was broken, the adoptee came under the *potestas* of the adoptive *paterfamilias*.⁷⁵

Adoptio, then, provides a concept where the motivation remains in the interest of the adopting party's desire to maintain their familial legacy, but the defining emphasis of the process is in the transfer of a person from being under the *potestas* of one *paterfamilias* to another, rather than on the total assimilation of one familial group by adrogation of one family head under another.

In regards to the resultant status of sonship that Roman adoptees received, Lyall notes that both *adoptio* and *adrogatio* produced the same effect, 'The adoptee is taken out of his previous state and is placed in a new relationship with his new *paterfamilias*. All his old debts are canceled, and in effect he starts a new life.'⁷⁶ In so doing, Lyall concludes that the Pauline *huiiothesia* concept probably found its source in the Roman background, given its permanent and legally binding transference of one's familial relationships from one to another.⁷⁷ As such, Lyall invests *huiiothesia* with a forensic emphasis. Heim adds to this forensic perception by highlighting that it provided 'several substantial benefits for the adopted son, including the cancellation of any outstanding debts and acquiring the status of his new *familia*.'⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Scott, *Sons*, 10.

⁷⁵ Heim, 'Light,' 133. See also: Burke, 'Sons,' 273-4. This manumitting of the adoptee by his original *paterfamilias* was facilitated by the legal process of *mancipio*. The limit of three emancipations was legislated in order to protect an adoptee from abuse by being continuously sold and redeemed by an irresponsible *paterfamilias*. Lyall, *Slaves*, 86-7. See also: Schoenberg, 'Huiiothesia,' 118.

⁷⁶ Lyall, 'Law,' 466. Lyall, *Slaves*, 83.

⁷⁷ Lyall identifies the *huiiothesia* concept in both Roman *adrogatio* and *adoptio*. Lyall, *Slaves*, 87. c.f. Houston, *Adoption*, 44. Kim, 'Adoption,' 135. Heim, 'Light,' 133.

⁷⁸ Heim, 'Light,' 133.

However, certain aspects of Roman familial dynamics and its emphasis on the judicial process of adoption give us reason to not place such exclusive location of *huiiothesia*'s source in the Roman context. As has been noted, in Roman families the *paterfamilias* possessed total control over the discipline and relationships of their household, even over adult children.⁷⁹ If Paul principally had this transference of paternal power and control in mind when he uses adoption then *huiiothesia*'s effect is less soteriological, and more governmental. Soteriologically, the idea of salvation through transformed paternal possession and authority could be beneficial, but how might Paul's hearers reconcile the potentially authoritarian aspects of Roman *patria potestas* with their new paternity under God, as their new *paterfamilias*?

Lyll remains the strongest proponent for a Roman background to *huiiothesia*, citing Paul's legal training and likely grasp of an a well-known legal device,⁸⁰ and the rich development of adoption in Roman law, as compared to the underdeveloped Greek, and apparent non-existence of adoption as a legal construct in Jewish law.⁸¹ However, his own assertion that Roman adoption 'functioned to preserve the family line and cultus, and not as an altruistic device for caring for orphans,'⁸² permits us to wonder whether Paul would have presented divine-adoption as a concept that was not principally interested in the welfare of believers. Thus, we believe that Lyll is working backwards, and determines his Pauline source for *huiiothesia* through a reverse correlation of forensic markers taken from a modern adoption concept.

Nonetheless, there are indeed aspects of Roman adoption that may likely have contributed to Paul's notion of *huiiothesia* as a soteriological metaphor — the character of the complete and permanent transfer of one's familial relations, and the equal status of both natural and adoptive sons potentially contribute to a soteriology of adoption that we may be able to subsequently detect in the *huiiothesia* texts.

⁷⁹ Schoenberg notes, 'Among the Romans the rights of fathers over their sons (*patria potestas*) was extreme and almost despotic.' Schoenberg, 'Huiiothesia,' 118. c.f. Peppard who notes, that, in practice Roman fathers were not as despotic as the law allowed them to be. Peppard, *Son*, 51.

⁸⁰ Lyll, *Slaves*, 80.

⁸¹ Lyll, *Slaves*, 69.

⁸² Lyll, 'Law,' 459.

2.1.3. Greek Influence

Greek practice of adoption existed as long as five centuries before Christ.⁸³ Lyall investigates the legal device of Greek adoption, finding,

Under Greek law ... adoption could occur in one of three ways. ... *inter vivos*, through a formal ceremony during the lifetime of the adopter, ... Alternatively, it was possible to adopt by will; ... In the third kind of adoption ... the kindred of heirs of an intestate might arrange for someone, usually one of their number, to be made the son of the deceased by a posthumous adoption.⁸⁴

However, despite Paul's grasp of Hellenistic culture, few scholars conclude that his Greek background bore any significant influence on his *huiiothesia* meaning,⁸⁵ certainly, at least, relative to the Roman influence given its more established practice. Scholars note that Grecian motivations for adoption were principally to perpetuate the family line and cultus in the circumstance of no male heirs.⁸⁶

Greek adoption differed from Roman adoption significantly given that, in Greek adoption, the adoptee

would pass only under the minimal control of [an adoptive] father. ... He could transmit the estate only to his own lawful natural child or to the next heir ... This therefore meant that the adoptee was not the full and unrestricted owner of the estate (*oikos*).⁸⁷

Berger also notes that Greek adoption laws meant that women could not be adopted.⁸⁸ Lyall, therefore, concludes, 'the Greek law of adoption was a pale shadow of the Roman, existing more as a succession device than anything else,'⁸⁹ and favours a Roman source between the two. Whilst we do not necessarily agree with Lyall's conclusion that Paul's source was exclusively Roman, we do agree that his source was probably not Greek given that Paul wrote to audiences in Roman provinces, and the far most established concept of adoption in Roman culture likely overshadowing any Grecian influence.

⁸³ Schoenberg, 'Huiiothesia,' 116.

⁸⁴ Lyall, *Slaves*, 89-90.

⁸⁵ Box stands as one notable exception in concluding that Paul's *huiiothesia* source is Greek. Box, 'Adoption,' 115.

⁸⁶ Scott, *Sons*, 4. Schoenberg, 'Huiiothesia,' 118. Heim, 'Light,' 130.

⁸⁷ Lyall, *Slaves*, 93.

⁸⁸ Berger, 'Adoption,' 13.

⁸⁹ Lyall, 'Law,' 465.

2.1.4. Jewish Influence

Scholars note, at the time of Paul's writing, Jewish law possessed no legal prescription for adoption.⁹⁰ However, the lack of legal foundation and process does not necessarily mean a vacancy of adoptive concept in ancient Jewish culture. As scholars broadened their search for an adoption practice in Jewish history they have discovered a wide range of biblical, and extra-biblical examples, and have come to conclusions that define Jewish adoption as something that was more socially than forensically grounded.

Peppard notes the cases of Moses's nurturing by Pharaoh's daughter (Exod. 2:5-10); the fosterage of Esther by Mordecai (Esth. 2:7); and Naomi's assumption of Ruth and Boaz's child as her own grandson (Ruth 4:16-17).⁹¹ Theron contributes the cases of Abraham's appointment of Eliezer, a slave born in his household, as his heir (Gen. 15:2-3); Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, becoming the sons of Jacob (Gen. 48:5); and Pharaoh's apparent "adoption" of Genubath (1 Kings 11:20).⁹² Friedeman adds to the above the cases of Sheshan's "adoption" of Jarha or Attai (1 Chron. 2:34-5); and Barzillai the Gileadite's "adoption" of Barzillai (not the Gileadite — Ezra 2:61).⁹³ It appears, then, that several occasions of adoptive practice appear throughout the OT narratives.⁹⁴

Additionally, Friedeman notes multiple instances of adoptive practice in extra-biblical, Hebrew sources, highlighting: Ahiqar's "adoption" of Nadin (Ahiqar 6-7); Uriah's "adoption" of Yedoniah (Brooklyn Papyrus 8); Nir's "adoption" of Melchizedek (2 Enoch); and Abraham's "adoption" of Lot (Jubilees 12.30), amongst others.⁹⁵ Scott also notes other anecdotal evidence where the Essenes probably adopted children.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ 'Judaism has no *halakhic* (that is, referring to Jewish law) structure for adoption, and the Hebrew language didn't even have a term for it until modernity.' Yarden, 'Adoption,' 276. See also: Schoenberg, 'Huiiothesia,' 119-120. Loane, *Hope*, 58. Lyall, *Slaves*, 67. Of note, however, in Deut. 25:5-10 we find the codification of Levirate marriage which provided a way for deceased, Israelite males with no heirs to have their lineage maintained. Theron, 'Adoption,' 7. Lyall discounts levirate marriage as relevant to the discovery of *huiiothesia's* background. Lyall, *Slaves*, 71.

⁹¹ Peppard and Lyall caution that these three instances are more akin to fosterage and all occur outside of a wholly Jewish context. Peppard, *Son*, 99. Lyall, 'Law,' 461-4.

⁹² Theron, 'Adoption,' 7. Also Yarden, 'Adoption,' 276.

⁹³ Friedeman, 'Lineage,' 256-68.

⁹⁴ Yarden's argues that Jewish tradition appears to categorise these cases as adoptive in nature. Yarden, 'Adoption,' 277.

⁹⁵ Friedeman, 'Lineage,' 258-64.

⁹⁶ Scott, *Sons*, 84.

Taken together, the weight of evidence for a *custom* of adoption in Jewish culture, motivated by concerns of family lineage and inheritance,⁹⁷ is clear, even if the *regulation* of such practice was not present in Mosaic law.

However, there is another important aspect of Jewish heritage that provides an alternative perspective on how the Israelites may have conceived of adoption, and possibly underpinned Paul's *huiiothesia* background. That is, a concept not of Israelite adoption of other *people*, but adoption of the *nation* of Israel by God himself.

Scholars source the root of this adoption of Israel principally in the Exodus event when God, in Exo. 4:22, commands Moses to say to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son."⁹⁸ Theron notes 'Israel's liberation from their Egyptian serfdom is closely related to Israel's birth as a nation and to its sonship (Ex. 4:22; 2 Sam. 7:23; Hos. 2:1ff).'⁹⁹ Further, Scott notes 2 Sam. 7:14 as indicating a concept of divine adoption,¹⁰⁰ and elsewhere adds, 'this 2 Samuel 7:14 tradition expects that at the advent of the Messiah, God would redeem his people from Exile in a Second Exodus; he would restore them to a covenantal relationship; and he would adopt them, with the Messiah, as his sons.'¹⁰¹ Scott helpfully locates a Jewish concept of adoption that is not oriented around the custom of adopting individuals, but the adoption of an entire nation by God in order to provide salvation to them through a Messiah. This self-identification of Israel as the "son of God"¹⁰² is then further attested to in other OT locations (e.g. Deut. 14:1; Ps. 73:15; Is. 1:2-4; 30:1-9; 43:6; 45:11; 63:8; Jer. 3:14; 31:9-20).¹⁰³ As such, in regards to the probable source to Paul's *huiiothesia* motif if taken from an exclusively Jewish background, we must consider the likelihood that Paul may well have located this not in the limited custom of *Israelite* adoption, but in the more common awareness of *Israel's* adoption.

⁹⁷ Yarden, 'Adoption,' 278. Rossell, 'Testament,' 234. c.f. Fester, 'Adoption,' 53.

⁹⁸ Several scholars categorise this event as the first thematic instance of Israel's adoption by God. Peppard, *Son*, 139. Corniche, 'Adoption,' 74. Cook, 'Concept,' 136. Others only identify this as a prime occasion of God remarking Israel as his "son." McGrath, *Theology*, 210. Kim, 'Another,' 134. Wanamaker, 'Son,' 246.

⁹⁹ Theron, 'Adoption,' 7.

¹⁰⁰ Scott, *Sons*, 116.

¹⁰¹ Scott, 'Sonship,' 17.

¹⁰² Peppard, *Son*, 103. Emphasis mine. Burke and Lyall disagree, and believe that these instances refer more to a wider concept of Israel's "sonship" rather than its "adoption." Burke, *Family*, 48-58. Lyall, *Slaves*, 78.

¹⁰³ Schoenberg, 'Huiiothesia,' 115. Wanamaker, 'Son,' 246.

When taken as such, scholars identify strong characteristic links to the Pauline *huiiothesia* motif as expressed across its five occurrences. Scott surmises of Paul's theology,

Christ is the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16) and the messianic Son of God promised in 2 Samuel 7:12 and 14, respectively. Seen in context, therefore, the "adoption" in Galatians 4:5 must refer to the Jewish eschatological expectation based on 2 Samuel 7:14.¹⁰⁴

We may, therefore, agree with Watson's conclusion that, by Paul's time, Jews would have understood Israel to be in a father-son relationship with God, and 'Given the assumed familiarity of Paul's Roman audience with the Old Testament, it is likely that they would have read Paul's adoption metaphor, in part, against this background.'¹⁰⁵

Having assessed both the Greco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds of adoption, it remains difficult to determine whether any one of the contexts would have provided an exclusive source to Paul's *huiiothesia* motif. The occasion of Paul's writing to audiences in Roman territories, yet heavy allusions to OT themes of adoption and sonship, forces us to consider the possibility that Paul may have employed *huiiothesia* to apply aspects of *both* Roman and Jewish understandings of adoption.

2.1.5. υίοθεσία — A Synthetic Approach

As we have seen, some scholars conclude a Jewish background to Paul's *huiiothesia* metaphor, with investigators disagreeing with the coincidental occurrence of Paul's Roman citizenship or prevalence of the Roman *adoptio* practice as sufficiently pointing towards a conclusion of adoption as a legal metaphor in Paul's application.¹⁰⁶ Conversely, others have argued that the very presence of an existing and well-known concept of adoption in Roman society meant that Paul did not need to draw from the Jewish context.¹⁰⁷ Given the merits of both possibilities we must, therefore, consider the scenario that Paul synthesised Roman adoption with the concept of Israel's adoption in order to create an enriched background to his adoption metaphor as a soteriological motif.

In an attempt to locate *huiiothesia's* source, Heim utilises a multidisciplinary approach by postulating 'an interanimation theory of metaphor, [which] holds that no single word has a metaphorical meaning, but rather the meaning of a metaphor is found at the level of a

¹⁰⁴ Scott, 'Sonship,' 17. Heim agrees. Heim, 'Light,' 121.

¹⁰⁵ Watson, *Paul*, 174.

¹⁰⁶ Scott, 'Sonship,' 16.

¹⁰⁷ Lyall, 'Law,' 464.

complete utterance, as it is dependent upon the *interanimation of words*.¹⁰⁸ That is, how do all the words in the context of the metaphorical utterance interact with one another. While such an approach may appear to risk a subjectivity of interpretation, Heim argues this “interanimation” of words can elicit meaning ‘without lapsing into a hopeless miasma of the metaphorical realm where there is no possibility of fixed meaning, as long as one recognizes that an utterance (whether literal or metaphorical) *picks out a referent*.’¹⁰⁹ The “referent,” then, is the key to Heim’s technique — it is by identifying the correct referent that a more precise meaning of the message can be extracted. In this method, the referent is discernible through identifying that every application of a metaphor utilises the two variables of a “tenor,” and any number of “vehicles.” By tenor, Heim understands this to be the main concept being communicated, whilst vehicle differentiates the ideas — images, adjectives, or other descriptors — used to communicate the characteristics of the tenor in order to imbue it with meaning. Through this approach, Heim concludes an intercultural understanding of adoption, where the Jewish “sonship” understanding and Roman adoption custom each gives ‘its own voice to Paul’s reader.’¹¹⁰ This culturally synthetic conceptualisation of *huiiothesia* will enable us to discern a richer scope of adoption’s soteriological grounds and effects by keeping in mind the full scope of cultural contexts from where Paul draws *huiiothesia*’s meaning. In doing so, we may conclude, with Bent,

By using a well-known cultural practice in conjunction with the redemptive-historical typology of God’s claiming Israel at Exodus, Paul could begin to describe and explain the spiritual reality that was taking place in the people. ... Paul is drawing both from the traditions of the Old Testament and using to Roman legal practice to affirm and expand what it means to be the adopted child of God.¹¹¹

Paul, as a Roman citizen and a Jewish scholar, was most likely influenced by both of his cultural heritages, and so we shall proceed to inspect *huiiothesia* with his grasp of both Roman and Jewish adoption in mind.

Having identified the peculiar characteristics and practice of both Roman legal adoption and Israelite identification as the adopted sons of God, and accepting that Paul possessed a synthetic source for his adoption metaphor, we now turn to the five *huiiothesia* texts in order to discern their particular contributions towards the construction of a Pauline doctrine of adoption.

¹⁰⁸ Heim, ‘Light,’ 33. Emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁹ Heim, ‘Light,’ 33. Emphasis mine.

¹¹⁰ Heim, ‘Light,’ 126. c.f. Wanamaker and Watson, who suggest similar approaches. Wanamaker, ‘Son,’ 254. Watson, *Paul*, 148.

¹¹¹ Bent, ‘What,’ 87. Others agree, Cook, ‘Concept,’ 139-40. Burke, ‘Sons,’ 266-7. Davids, ‘Adoption,’ 13. Ferguson, ‘Doctrine,’ 85.

2.2. Pauline Adoption — From Protology to Eschatology

Paul uses the term *huiiothesia* (adoption) a total of five times, in three of his letters (Rom. 8:15; 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5) and is the only author to employ the term. As we explore the huiiothesian texts we wish to, first, consider if it is possible to organise the texts in a way that helps us approach their interpretation that aids a systematic organisation.

Trumper makes such a judgement, and discerns a thematic development of *huiiothesia* across the Pauline corpus. He models it diagrammatically:

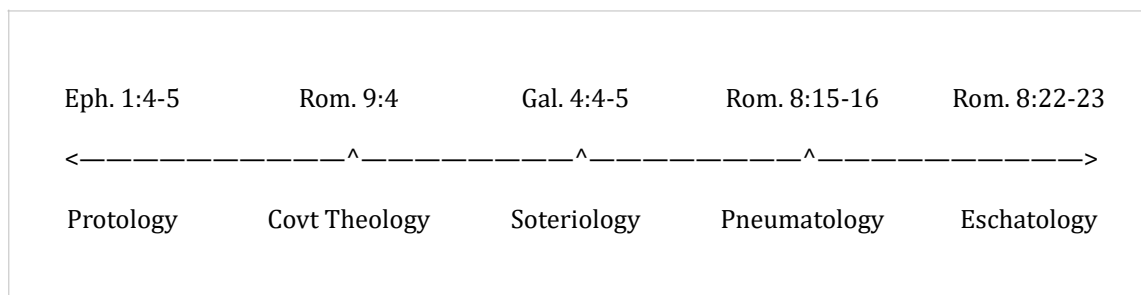


Fig. 2.2 — Trumper's 'The Redemptive-Historical Unfolding of Adoption'¹¹²

Trumper's organisation is helpful, and allows us to consider a biblical theology of adoption that is systematically and thematically developmental as we begin our survey of the *huiiothesia* texts.

¹¹² Trumper, 'Study,' 3. c.f. Tse, *Assurance*, 20. Tse agrees with Trumper's scriptural progression, but categorises them, respectively, as the authoring, anticipation, arrival, assurance, and achievement of adoption. Tse's alliterative labels highlight certain exegetical themes in the text, but Trumper's categorisation more helpfully identifies a historical-redemptive schema. c.f. Garner, 'Adoption,' 40. Garner shifts Rom. 8:22-23 to the beginning of the order, giving the passage precedence due to his classification of it as teleological in nature. We agree with Trumper's classification, as will be discussed.

2.2.1. Predestined for Adoption — Ephesians 1:3-5

In his epistle to the Ephesians, the author¹¹³ writes:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

Here the author states the profound nature of the believer's adoption as something preordained in the mind of God, purposed for the blessing of believers to become his sons. This adoption is explained as being achieved through Christ, and was instigated by the will of the Father. Further, this adoption is linked to the transformation to being "holy and blameless," expressing the soteriological dynamic that adoption to sonship pertains to salvation.

Scholars note that this pre-temporal origination of adoption as a consequence of God's election of believers.¹¹⁴ Indeed, the parallelism of "chosen" (v.4), and "predestined" (v.5), enables us to link the status of "holy and blameless" (v.4), to the status of "adoption as sons" (v.5). Fowl agrees when he highlights the author's emphatic point, 'predestining believers to be adopted through Christ is the way in which God brings about believers' sanctity.'¹¹⁵ Critically, the author identifies that it is on no account of any human merit that adoption is realised, but wholly due to the elective action of God.¹¹⁶ Thus, adoption, in response to Irenaeus's soteriological neglect, is given its protological and soteriological grounding — God, before time, had already decided to use adoption as the means by which he would bring about the salvation of believers by making them his sons.

The author also locates the adoption as initiated by the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and describes the adoption as achieved "through Jesus Christ," indicating a Trinitarian

¹¹³ Trumper acknowledges the doubt of Pauline authorship of Ephesians, but determines the scenario of low significance, since that the later date of the letter establishes a tradition of *huiiothesia* as a soteriological concept for the early church. Trumper, 'Import (II),' 102.

¹¹⁴ Tse, *Assurance*, 21. Garner, 'Adoption,' 68. Best, *Commentary*, 122.

¹¹⁵ Fowl, *Ephesians*, 41.

¹¹⁶ Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 1:4. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 51.

framework of adoption whereby the Father wills the act — what Trumper defines as the ‘efficient cause of adoption’¹¹⁷ — and the Son who enables it through union to himself.¹¹⁸

Fowl, here, locates the *huiiothesia* context to be drawn from the Roman source, perceiving the ‘breaking all former bonds to a natural father and going under the domain of a new father.’¹¹⁹ Stott affirms this line of thought when he indicates the occasion of Ephesians as the authors attempt to bring reconciliation between its Jewish and Gentile audiences, by explicating how they have been made part of the same household.¹²⁰ Consequently, the Trinitarian work of adoption produces a concrete and transformative change of familial relationships both with God the Father, as well as with other believers now as members of the same family. The soteriology of adoption is, therefore, not merely founded upon a change of sentimental affections, but grounded in the real and permanent transformation of one’s constitutive relationships.¹²¹

2.2.2. To Them Belongs the Adoption — Romans 9:4-5

They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

In Rom. 9:4-5, Paul identifies that the Israelites have already received an adoption.¹²² Of what origin and nature of adoption is he referring to?

Scholars make the observation that the word endings of the six privileges Paul lists here indicate three couplets, thereby connecting Israel’s adoption (*huiiothesia*), with their being given the law (*nomothesia*) at Sinai.¹²³ However, this “adoptive” sonship required

¹¹⁷ Trumper, ‘Exposition (I),’ 66. Emphasis original.

¹¹⁸ Fowl, *Ephesians*, 42. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 52. c.f. Hodge, *Ephesians*, 35. Hodge considers that adoptive-sonship involves ‘Participation of [God’s] nature, or conformity to his image.’ But Hodge facilitates this through the Johannine idea of conferred sonship (John 1:12).

¹¹⁹ Fowl, *Ephesians*, 42. Best agrees with a Roman background. Best, *Commentary*, 124.

¹²⁰ Stott, *Cross*, 195.

¹²¹ Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 68. c.f. Lyall, ‘Law,’ 459.

¹²² Burke believes that Paul is drawing upon the Jewish eschatological hope of becoming God’s sons in Rom. 9:4. Burke, ‘Spirit,’ 314.

¹²³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 483. Trumper, ‘Exposition (I),’ 68. c.f. Ryrie who locates *huiiothesia* here in Exo. 4:22. Ryrie, *Theology*, 353.

maturity and perfection through the fulfilment of the law that was given to Israel as God's son.¹²⁴ Garner comments,

when Paul puts *υιοθεσία* in parallel with *νομοθεσία* in Rom 9:4, he does so because he understands the continuous redemptive-historical connection between sonship and worshipful, filial obedience. Therefore, the teleology of Pauline *υιοθεσία*, consistent with its Old Testament type, is moral and spiritual purity, whereby the son dwells in peace with his Father because of conformity to his Father's expectation.¹²⁵

Garner's deduction helps us see that authentic adoptive-sonship is not merely derived from constitution, but requires fulfilment through filial obedience — true sonship is manifest only when a son acts in the manner that his father desires; that is, authentic sonship (including sonship by adoption) is *qualitative*, not merely constituted.

In this light, Paul's words in v.2-3, and afterwards in v.6-8 may be interpreted as reference to how ethnic Israel failed to live up to its covenantal expectation of filial obedience, and, thus, their disassociation from the family of faith, despite their familial heritage in Abraham.¹²⁶ However, despite ethnic Israel's failure to fulfil the covenantal requirements of sonship, Paul recognises that it will be all who are "children of the promise" (v. 8) that are truly chosen — "counted as offspring."¹²⁷ Indeed, scholars note that Paul, referring to the conferred sonship of Israel at Sinai, specifically chooses the term *huiiothesia* here, rather than "firstborn,"¹²⁸ since *huiiothesia* creatively allows him to allude to the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles into the covenantal expectations of adopted Israel.¹²⁹ As such, Garner asserts, 'God reveals his sovereign grace in selecting national Israel as his son for his purposes, *an act which points eschatologically to the new covenant adoption of sons/daughters for his own purposes.*'¹³⁰

This marks Israel's "adoption" here as their entrance into a *theocratic* sonship to God. As such, in nuanced response to Calvin's assertion that OT sonship *is* NT sonship, we may

¹²⁴ Trumper, 'Exposition (I),' 70. Murray, *Epistle*, 4. This "immature" sonship of Israel will be further explored in the next section on Gal. 4:4-5.

¹²⁵ Garner, 'Adoption,' 91. Schreiner agrees that this sonship expectation here is spiritual, not merely behavioural. Schreiner, *Romans*, 483-4.

¹²⁶ 'Jewish birth does not guarantee inclusion into the covenant line of blessing.' Watson, *Paul*, 176. c.f. Griffith, 'Title,' 142. Moo, *Epistle*, 562.

¹²⁷ c.f. Garner, 'Adoption,' 69-70. Griffith, 'Title,' 142.

¹²⁸ Heim comments, 'Where there can be only one "firstborn" or "only child,"... *υιοθεσία* does not preclude the possibility of other sons.' Heim, 'Light,' 286.

¹²⁹ Garner, 'Adoption,' 42.

¹³⁰ Garner, 'Adoption,' 69-70. Emphasis mine.

instead hold that Israel's adoptive sonship, whilst indicative of covenantal sonship, in its nature was only reformational of their constitutional sonship, and not transformational of their filial disposition.

In regards to Paul's source of *huiiothesia* here, it becomes clear that its tenor of the historical-covenantal blessing of Israel's sonship to God locates the referent source of *huiiothesia* to the Jewish conception of their ethnic adoption,¹³¹ and distinguishes it from the specific concept of believers' adoption that Paul employs elsewhere.¹³² The protological *huiiothesia* in the mind of God, thus, finds its covenantal institution through the choosing of Israel as God's son in the redemptive-historical schema of adoption.¹³³

2.2.3. The Adoption as Sons — Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Trumper classifies Gal. 4:4-5 as containing Paul's main soteriological framework of adoption.¹³⁴ Scholars are, however, in disagreement as to the cultural source that Paul has in mind when he utilises *huiiothesia* in Gal. 4:5, and a preliminary discussion around his source is beneficial to our enquiry here.

Linguistically, Burke notes that Paul uses the compound verb *apolobōmen* as to "receive back," rather than a more simply verb of "to receive," and that such a construction refers to the Roman procedure of adoption where the son was sold as a slave and then bought back three times.¹³⁵ Heim develops this argument when she applies her intertextual approach, noting,

it is likely that *υιοθεσία* as a vehicle is particularly evocative of adoption as a *mode of entrance* into sonship. ... Paul's metaphor is perhaps more likely to evoke a model that

¹³¹ Heim, 'Light,' 311. Box, 'Adoption,' 115.

¹³² Murray, *Epistle*, 4.

¹³³ Byrne, *Sons*, 81. c.f. Cook, 'Concept,' 138.

¹³⁴ Trumper, 'Study,' 3.

¹³⁵ Burke, *Family*, 88.

connects the “making of sons” in the event of adoption to an action taken by the Father, which is the case both in Greco-Roman adoption and in Galatians 4:5.¹³⁶

However, from a literary view, Garner and Scott note Paul’s reference to the Abrahamic covenant located in the heirship of Israel while the nation was still in a state of infancy (v.1).¹³⁷ Scott notes,

Gal 4:5 is set within a context framed by Exodus typology: just as Israel, as heir to the Abrahamic promise, was redeemed as son of God from slavery in Egypt at the time appointed by the Father (vv. 1-2), so also believers were redeemed to adoption as sons of God from slavery.¹³⁸

Developing both of these arguments, Wanamaker explores an alternative intertextual interpretation by reading Gal. 4:5 in light of the Pauline objective to counter the Judaizers teaching in Gal. 3:26-4:7.¹³⁹ In v. 5, Christians from both cultural backgrounds are, thus, equally portrayed as slaves who need redemption before they could be adopted into heirship.¹⁴⁰ For Wanamaker, *huiiothesia* in Gal. 4:5 is, then, both juridically founded, and relationally constitutive.¹⁴¹ Thus, following Wanamaker, we may locate the tenor of *huiiothesia* in Gal. 4:4-5 neither particularly to Roman adoption to heirship, nor particularly to the sonship of Israel in the giving of the law, but in the sonship of Christ himself.¹⁴² In this way Paul creatively synthesises the Roman concept of adoption — its juridical foundation, its character of redemption from enslavement, and intentions of providing heirship — *with* the Israelite concept — of filial identity through obedience to the law, hope for eschatological sonship, and expectation of heirship to the Abrahamic promise.¹⁴³ This synthesised semantic of adoption provides the basis for Christ’s role as the saviour, through whom all believers, both Jew and Gentile, can identify as the Father’s own

¹³⁶ Heim, ‘Light,’ 162. Emphasis original. c.f. deSilva, *Letter*, 354.

¹³⁷ Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 92. Scott, *Sons*, 267.

¹³⁸ Scott, *Sons*, 267-8.

¹³⁹ Wanamaker, ‘Son,’ 295-303. Thielman affirms this approach of interpreting Gal. 4:5 in the context of Gal. 3:21-4:7 in order to avoid identifying an exclusively Greco-Roman, or Israelite background of adoption. Thielman, *Romans*, 425.

¹⁴⁰ Wanamaker, ‘Son,’ 337-8.

¹⁴¹ Wanamaker, ‘Son,’ 338-43. Wanamaker asserts a Greco-Roman background to Pauline *huiiothesia* in principle, leading to an attempt here to connect Jewish “justification” to filial obedience and right living. He notes a juridical basis to believers’ adoption, akin to Roman adoptive practice, but his connection of Gal. 4:5 to the wider Abrahamic context in Gal. 3 works against his exclusively Roman identification. c.f. Cosgrove, who concludes that the focus of Gal. 3 is not about justification, but around the idea of Israel’s inheritance. Cosgrove, *Cross*, 32.

¹⁴² Wanamaker, ‘Son,’ 342.

¹⁴³ c.f. Keener who blends both contexts in his exegesis. Keener, *Galatians*, 185.

obedient son, and in whom they find their own adoption as sons. Thus, in response to the question that Athanasius highlights for us — whether believers’ adoptive sonship is grounded upon Christ’s incarnate sonship, or upon his *work* as a son — we find that the believer’s sonship is derived from Christ’s character of *obedience* as a son, and not specifically from his ontology as the eternally begotten Son.

Having established a synthetic referent, we can further consider how Paul’s adaptation of *huiothesia* acts as a device to distinguish Christ’s sonship from believers’ adoptive-sonship (contra Origen’s trajectory that believers’ sonship is derived from the sonship of the eternally begotten Son). Dunn notes,

Paul's point is precisely that the Galatian believers by sharing in Christ's sonship (iv.6-7) share also in the sonship of Abraham (iii.29); or rather, that they share not only in the lesser sonship of Abraham but even in sonship of the Christ.¹⁴⁴

By describing the mode of this sonship as adoptive, Paul is therefore able to maintain the distinct Sonship of Christ as divine and pre-temporal,¹⁴⁵ yet his incarnation, as one born to a woman and under the law, presents him as mediatorial in his capacity.¹⁴⁶ Ridderbos adds that Christ

subjected himself to the law, in order to redeem those enslaved by it: He removed the curse from them and made them ethically free. ... freedom contained in Sonship.¹⁴⁷

Jesus Christ, in obedience to the will of the Father — as expressed through the law — including his obedience to death on the cross,¹⁴⁸ redeems both Jews and Gentiles from their state of enslavement,¹⁴⁹ and makes a way for them to be adopted as God’s own

¹⁴⁴ Dunn, *Epistle*, 214.

¹⁴⁵ Wanamaker, ‘Son,’ 123.

¹⁴⁶ Burke, *Family*, 117-8. deSilva, *Letter*, 355-6. Smail, *Father*, 145.

¹⁴⁷ Ridderbos, *Epistle*, 156. Ridderbos relates adoption to the notion of “ethics” rather than “justice,” thereby emphasising the social and relational nature of adoption as opposed to a forensic and legal perspective on sin and atonement. c.f. Dunn who notes, ‘it was by his sharing in Israel’s subjection to the law during his life, as by his sharing in the status of the outcast from the law in his death (iii.13), that his death and resurrection were able to effect redemption for both Jew and Gentile.’ Dunn, *Epistle*, 216.

¹⁴⁸ Keener, *Galatians*, 184.

¹⁴⁹ Burke, *Family*, 86-7. Hulse, ‘Doctrine,’ 8.

children. In doing so, he marks them as true Israel,¹⁵⁰ and heirs of faithful Abraham; the ones to whom the promise of inheritance was truly designated for.¹⁵¹

In v. 6-7, Paul then states that because of this adoption the “Spirit of the Son” is given to the sons of God.¹⁵² Paul’s point here is not to specify the chronology of the pneumatic reception, but to show *that* the reception of the Spirit enables believers to address God no longer in the capacity of slaves, but in the conscious reality of being sons who may now call him “Abba, Father.”¹⁵³ This address of God by his adopted sons reflects the new intimacy they are privileged to enjoy with him.¹⁵⁴

Paul, in his attempt to forge a united community of Jews and Gentiles in Galatia, presents Christ as the one through whom all believers are now adopted into the same family. Acceptance by God is no longer achieved through law observance, but by faithful solidarity with Christ in his obedience to God; his soteriological work of redeeming slaves unto the freedom of sonship. As believers are adopted into this sonship to God, the Spirit of the Son enables them to experience their new relational reality through the ability to address God as “Abba.”

2.2.4. The Spirit of Adoption — Romans 8:15-16

Scholars mark Romans 8:15-16 as Paul’s pneumatology of adoption. There he writes:

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!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Considering the concept of the “spirit of slavery,” consensus is that this does not refer to an actual spiritual being, whether malevolent or holy, nor does it refer to the human spirit under bondage, but functions as a rhetorical device used by Paul to highlight the actual function of the “Spirit of adoption;” he does *not* bring about fear, but *does* grant the

¹⁵⁰ Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 95.

¹⁵¹ Cosgrove, *Cross*, 52.

¹⁵² c.f. Rom. 8:15-16, where the Spirit is referred to as the “Spirit of adoption” (*huiiothesia*).

¹⁵³ Mawhinney, ‘God,’ 185.

¹⁵⁴ Beeke, *Heirs*, loc. 403. Wanamaker notes the striking use of Abba to address God, given that Jesus’ own use of Abba underscored his ‘special knowledge of God as a Son (Matt. 11.27).’ Wanamaker, ‘Son,’ 66. See also: Burke, *Characteristics*, 72.

freedom of sonship.¹⁵⁵ Here, the assumption is that the reception of the Spirit himself is what brings about the adoption of believers, rather than being received after the fact.¹⁵⁶ It is the Spirit, acting as agent of the Father, that particularises the transformation of the relationship between the Father and believers by adoption.¹⁵⁷ This act produces a tangible change in the believer's experience of God, and assures them of their sonship, as Lloyd-Jones comments of v.15, Paul 'means that it is a consciousness of the fact that we have been adopted into the family of God. A consciousness of it, and not merely a belief.'¹⁵⁸ This assurance of sonship is brought about in the heart of the believer by the witness of both the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the believer as they become conscious of their transformed, filial status.¹⁵⁹ Heim notes,

this is not necessarily to say that the Spirit's cry is an ecstatic or charismatic experience, but that the language and root metaphors in the text communicate that the cry of the Spirit is an emotionally intimate response that comes from the innermost part of the believer.¹⁶⁰

Further, the Spirit enables the adopted sons to acknowledge and address God as "Abba, Father,"¹⁶¹ and, in so doing, further confirms the reality of the relational transformation against a purely sentimental sense of it.¹⁶²

This reception of the Spirit of adoption then forms the basis of the ongoing renewal of the heart of the believer from the moment of their adoption, and their consequent pursuit of filial obedience and holiness then provides the evidential basis of their salvation and

¹⁵⁵ Murray, *Epistle*, 295. Schreiner observes a similar rhetorical use of fictional construct in 1 Cor. 2:12 and 2 Tim. 1:7. Schreiner, *Romans*, 424.

¹⁵⁶ Moo extrapolates from Rom. 8:14, 23, and Gal. 4:6, that, this "Spirit of adoption" must be the Holy Spirit. Moo, *Epistle*, 500. Schreiner leans towards the reception of the Spirit causing adoption, not as its consequence. Schreiner, *Romans*, 425. c.f. Gal. 4:5, where the chronology of adoption seems to be that Spirit reception follows sonship. Burke, *Family*, 136.

¹⁵⁷ Moo, *Epistle*, 502. Scott, 'Sons,' 260-1. Garner, 'Adoption,' 117. Burke, 'Spirit,' 318. Hodge, *Sons*, 76. Longenecker, 'Metaphor,' 75. Wanamaker, 'Son,' 378. Byrne, *Sons*, 109. Murray holds a dissenting position, that, the Spirit is not the agent of adoption, but only induces sentiments of filial love for the Father, and confidence of sonship. Murray, *Epistle*, 296.

¹⁵⁸ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 235-6. See also: Burke, 'Spirit,' 323.

¹⁵⁹ Tse, *Assurance*, 76. Watson, *Paul*, 162. Schreiner, *Romans*, 426. Burke, *Family*, 149.

¹⁶⁰ Heim, 'Light,' 181. Burke, *Family*, 150. c.f. Murray, *Epistle*, 297.

¹⁶¹ Lloyd-Jones notes that slave children were not allowed to call their masters by this term. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 241. Longenecker notes that the linking of the Aramaic term "abba," with the greek articular term "hopatêr," indicates that such an affectionate consciousness of intimate relationship with God was widespread among early believers in Jesus, whether Aramaic or Greek speaking.' Longenecker, 'Metaphor,' 74.

¹⁶² Hodge, *Romans*, 418. Loane, *Hope*, 59.

sonship.¹⁶³ Thus, Spirit wrought adoptive-sonship is what completes adoption's Trinitarian grounding:¹⁶⁴ as the Spirit aids the believer in the pursuit of filial obedience, the fruit of their new spiritual disposition — corresponding to that which the Son manifested in his own obedience — confirms their transformed relationship to the Father as his children. This status of sonship is what also guarantees their future inheritance (v. 17), as long as they show faithful solidarity to the life of suffering that Jesus himself encountered.¹⁶⁵

In determining the referent of Rom. 8:15-16, we may firstly look to the vehicles of the witness of the Spirit and of the believer's spirit confirming the reality of their adoption. In Roman practice, adoption had to be performed in front of witnesses who could testify to the fact that the adoption had taken place.¹⁶⁶ Reflecting on this background for Rom. 8:16, Hodge notes, 'the adoption transaction is made official by the spirit, which "witnesses (*συμμαρτυρεῖ*)"'¹⁶⁷ Heim, further, notes how the change of metaphorical *paterfamilias* over the believer corresponds to a Roman practice.¹⁶⁸

However, other aspects of the passage seem to refer to a Jewish background. Principally, the notion of believers being enabled to call God their "Abba" is indicative — why would Paul suggest an Aramaic term if his *huiiothesia* source is purely Roman? Instead, Paul chooses to connect the Aramaic and Greek terms for father here, and calls to mind the Jewish awareness of their identity as the sons of God.¹⁶⁹ By adding the notion of heirship and inheritance (v.17) to this exclamation of paternity Paul is, then, drawing upon the OT idea that God's people would receive their inheritance *at the eschaton*. Watson concludes,

This application of eschatological privilege previously made strictly to Israel is now, as a result of the promised fulfilment of the covenants made between God and Israel, reapplied to all believers, both Jews and Gentiles. The language of adoption/inheritance, then, is reserved for the people of God and is used in the present age to

¹⁶³ Garner, 'Adoption,' 114.

¹⁶⁴ Heim notes, 'The cognitive structure *υιοθεσία* creates for the experience of receiving the Spirit also entails the activity and agency of all three members of the Trinity.' Heim, 'Light,' 217.

¹⁶⁵ Osbourne comments, 'Most likely Paul is thinking of more than just persecution, as his list of his own sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 demonstrates. ... Believers experience the glory of Christ as they share in his sufferings.' Osbourne, *Romans*, 8:12-17.

¹⁶⁶ Burke, *Spirit*, 322.

¹⁶⁷ Hodge, *Sons*, 72.

¹⁶⁸ Heim, 'Light,' 237.

¹⁶⁹ Trumper, 'Exposition (I),' 74. Wanamaker further contends that Paul is referring to Jesus' own address to God as "Abba," and the unprecedented acknowledgement of intimacy that this reflected. Wanamaker, 'Son,' 66. c.f. Lewis, *Spirit*, 183.

describe those who are the recipients of what God has promised his eschatological people.¹⁷⁰

Paul draws upon both of his Roman and Jewish contexts as he synthesises a new concept of *huiiothesia* as the Spirit works about both particularising and confirming the adoptive sonship of believers. They are now transferred from one family into another, and enter into the inheritance that will be given to the sons of God promised long ago. Jews and Gentiles are now brought into one united family, able to call on God as their “*Abba*, father,” and assured in their spirit, by the witness of the Spirit of adoption, that they are sons of God.

2.2.5. Waiting Eagerly for Adoption — Romans 8:22-23

Trumper’s schema of historical-redemptive adoption concludes with Rom. 8:22-23, and classifies *huiiothesia*’s application here as eschatological:

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 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.

Here, Paul locates the future consummation of the believer’s adoption in their bodily transformation.¹⁷¹ This does not mean that believers are not already adopted in the present, rather, Paul uses *huiiothesia* to denote ‘both of a present privilege and of a future bestowment and that the latter brings to the fullest realisation the status and privilege enjoyed in this life as sons of God.’¹⁷² The transformation of believers’ bodies is essential to fully particularise their adoption since conformation to the resurrected sonship of Christ also means conformation to his transformed body. Indeed, the soteriological freedom of adoptive-sonship must be accompanied by freedom of glorified body.¹⁷³

In the midst of this period of waiting, the adopted sons “groan inwardly” as they suffer in faithful obedience to the filial life that anticipates glory (v.17), metaphorically reflecting the tension that even the created world manifests in its anticipation of transformed, new

¹⁷⁰ Watson, *Paul*, 190. Moo agrees with the observation that, here, *huiiothesia* finds its roots in OT concepts. Moo, *Epistle*, 501.

¹⁷¹ Kruse, *Letter*, 350. Trumper and Schreiner both call this an “eschatological adoption.” Trumper, ‘Import (II),’ 106. Schreiner, *Romans*, 439.

¹⁷² Murray, *Epistle*, 307-8.

¹⁷³ Trumper, ‘Exposition (I),’ 78. See also: Murray, *Epistle*, 308. Tse, *Assurance*, 24. Scott, ‘Adoption,’ 17.

creation.¹⁷⁴ However, this tension points forward in a hopeful manner, that what has already been achieved in pneumatologically conferred adoption (Rom 8:15-16) *will* be made complete through the believer's resurrection, and, further, that the finality of the believers' adoption, in their bodily glorification, is what all of creation itself is depending upon for its own renewal.¹⁷⁵

Here, then, we see adoption's eschatological dynamic, and further consolidate adoption's classification as a soteriological concept in Paul's thinking. If Rom. 8:15-16 reflected Paul's understanding that believers are *already* adopted by the power of the Spirit, then v.22-23 contrasts this present reality with the future finalisation of adoption through glorification, thus exhibiting Paul's typical "already-not yet" tension of the Christian's eschatological status.¹⁷⁶

Considering the possible classification of Rom. 8:22-23 as teleological, rather than eschatological,¹⁷⁷ Garner argues for the precedence of Rom. 8:15-16 as indicative of Paul's focus on the present reality of the believer's status in order to motivate their present choice of faith, and, therefore, v.22-23 do not point to a future promise of adoptive-sonship, but teleologically reflect the present reality of lived filial obedience. He argues,

In view of the underlying now but not yet eschatological tensions here, this ultimate restoration/glorification through adoption that takes place by the Spirit at the parousia provides an irrefutable necessity for current restoration and renovation by the Holy Spirit through adoption. The renovative teleology of adoptive sonship from Rom 8:23 coheres with the nature of that adoption in realized eschatology, and thus renovation in Rom. 8:12-17 comprises the present aspect of adoption.¹⁷⁸

However, Heim provides a nuance to Garner's interpretation, finding a thematic link between the two, local occurrences of *huiiothesia* in Rom. 8 that, ultimately, distinguish Rom. v.22-23 as eschatological. First, Heim perceives v.15-16 to function as speaking of adoption soteriologically, and ecclesiologically as believers are called to see each other as children with the same Father. Then, in v.22-23, Paul speaks eschatologically regarding God's future action to finalise the adoption of believers. Thus,

¹⁷⁴ Kruse, *Letter*, 350.

¹⁷⁵ Burke, *Family*, 188.

¹⁷⁶ Moo, *Epistle*, 501.

¹⁷⁷ Contra Trumper. Trumper, 'Study' 3.

¹⁷⁸ Garner, 'Adoption,' 110-1.

When combined, the two *υιοθεσία* metaphors tie together the complex dialectics between slavery and sonship, and between suffering and hope, with adoption to sonship forming an emphatic and resonant focal point for the entire passage.¹⁷⁹

As such, the notion of the *hope* of adoption underpinning this entire section leads us to place v.23 in the eschatological — future adoption is not only eschatologically reflective of presently achieved adoption, but provides the present grounding of the believer's faith to persevere in their sufferings whilst they patiently await their final redemption. This final redemption will result in the permanent status of sonship, which, in the schema of adoption, is what is truly teleological; that is, adoption's *present* soteriological function provides the grounds of believers' *present* hope in their eschatological glorification, and what, ultimately, makes *sonship* teleological of adoption.¹⁸⁰

2.3. Adoption — A Pauline Metaphor of Salvation

Now that we have explored the *huiothesia* texts and grasped Paul's theology of adoption, we may proceed to assess adoption's doctrinal contributions in a systematic organisation. Before we do, however, we must briefly explore the nature of how adoption functions as a soteriological metaphor. How does an understanding of adoption's nature as a metaphor prepare us to investigate its systematic function in a way that leverages its thematic concepts for their explanatory value, yet is cognisant of its metaphorical limits?

Positively, adoption provides us with a distinct metaphor from which we may enrich our Pauline soteriology. As Burke notes of other metaphors,

justification draws from the realm of the law courts, propitiation (Rom. 3:25) from the language of cultus or sacrificial system, redemption (Rom. 3:24) from the slave market and reconciliation (Rom. 5:11) borrows from the realm of friendship. Adoption is different, however and complements these other expressions because it draws on a completely different conceptual field, that of the ancient family.¹⁸¹

Thus, the metaphor of adoption provides us with a distinct perspective on atonement, presenting Christian salvation through concrete experience of a new, filial relationship to God. Salvation is not here regarded from one's individual standing before God's law, but regarded from one's acceptability before God's paternal personality. Indeed, this filial

¹⁷⁹ Heim, 'Light,' 239.

¹⁸⁰ Garner himself notes this classification of sonship as teleological elsewhere. Garner, 'Adoption,' 216.

¹⁸¹ Burke, *Message*, 141. See also: du Toit, 'Metaphors,' 243.

relationship by adoption is not purely “mythic,” but central to the lived experience of the believer. As Lewis argues,

While there was no process whereby God actually came and adopted believers ... It seems likely that Paul conceived of the Spirit and the new reality that believers experienced as co-heirs with Christ in baptism as “real,” and not merely metaphorical.¹⁸²

Negatively, however, we must remain conscious of adoption’s metaphorical limitations. Whilst adoption may helpfully explain and distinguish a manner by which God saves believers, it cannot ultimately explain all of salvation, either in the present, or the future consummation of it. As Houston points out, ‘sonship *is a blessed reality* ... though we cannot conceive of the manner of that ineffable love which brought us into this excellent relation, nor adequately declare what we shall be hereafter.’¹⁸³ We, thus, wish to highlight two principles as we approach a systematic assessment of adoption.

First, adoption’s nature as a metaphor allows Paul to describe salvation in ways that describe not only experienced reality but reality beyond present human experience. As Gunton argues,

metaphor may be used realistically, in that it enables not simply a human response to reality ... but also dimensions of reality to come to human expression. That is to say, ... metaphor is at the centre, and perhaps is the chief vehicle of, human rational relation with reality.¹⁸⁴

However, in regards to a relational metaphor such as adoption, there arises a risk of analogically transposing a dynamic of the Trinitarian, filial relationship — that is, the ontological sonship of the Son to the Father — too directly onto the adoptive sonship of believers to God. As Baroussa notes,

If ... the explanation of our intimate union with the trinitarian life were to be developed in a conceptual framework of adoption and filiation, one would be defeated in advance. For these concepts denote directly the persons involved in the union, and since in the union by grace the personalities of God and man remain ever distinct, any perfect unity is from this viewpoint impossible of explanation.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Lewis, *Spirit*, 187.

¹⁸³ Houston, *Adoption*, 156. Emphasis original.

¹⁸⁴ Gunton, *Father*, 183. Trumper calls this the ‘language of faith.’ Trumper, ‘Import (II),’ 99.

¹⁸⁵ Baroussa ‘Sonship,’ 330.

Baroussa means that whilst adoption draws on the concept of sonship we should not take the ontological, eternal sonship of the Son to the Father as perfectly typological of the adoptive-sonship of believers to the Father. Therefore, as we explore adoption's systematic functions, we must be careful to distinguish the "Sonship" of the Son to the Father from soteriologically wrought "sonship" by adoption, and, instead, discern what specific aspects of Christ's characteristic sonship are attributable, or not, to believers' sonship.

Secondly, we will need to maintain conceptual integrity in the articulation of any propositional doctrines that might be derived from the biblical interpretations we have explored. The importance of this principle becomes apparent when we consider how some scholars have erroneously attempted to describe adoption's particularisation using conceptually heterogeneous terms. For example, Gill describes adoption through the secondary metaphor of Christ's marriage to the Church, the Son of God, which results in the (in-law) filiation of believers to the Father —

The elect of God, his church and people, being espoused to the Son of God, they become the sons and daughters of the Lord God almighty.¹⁸⁶

Here, we see that maintaining *extrinsic* integrity against heterogeneous functions is required.

Inversely, Peterson conflates adoption with regeneration in order to create a filial identity that is forensically constituted by adoption, but spiritually particularised by regeneration, when he says,

Adoption is a legal action, taking place outside of us, whereby God the Father gives us a new status in his family. Regeneration is a renewal of our nature, occurring within us, in which the Father imparts spiritual life to us.¹⁸⁷

Peterson's thesis fails to properly account for adoption's spiritual potential (Rom. 8:22-23) to transform the heart of the believer, and, due to his identification of it as an exclusively forensic term, resultantly relies on regeneration to produce a filial heart in the adopted believer.¹⁸⁸ Here, we see the need to maintain *intrinsic* thematic integrity, by developing adoption's metaphorical scope fully in order to avoid the temptation to conflate it with concepts that fall outside of the familial context. Thus, pursuing conceptual discretion as

¹⁸⁶ Gill, *Body*, 297.

¹⁸⁷ Peterson, *Adopted*, 109.

¹⁸⁸ Peterson's chapter, entitled 'Adopted and Born Again?' integrates regeneration as a central mechanic of his schema of adoption. Peterson, *Adopted*, 97-112.

far as possible will be necessary as we assess how adoption is soteriologically achieved and applied. With these principles in mind, let us now turn to assess adoption's soteriology in a systematic organisation.

3. A Soteriology of Adoption

Having equipped ourselves with an understanding of Paul's *huiiothesia* motif in its synthetic, Jewish-Roman background, and assessed a biblical theology of adoption as Paul applies the term, we now turn to explore adoption in its systematic construction in order to determine its soteriological value. Correspondingly we need to establish how a thematic development of adoption produces an adoptive cosmology, soteriology, and eschatology in order to show how adoption functions as an atonement model that adequately explains the human condition from creation to fall; from fall to salvation; and from present salvation, to future glory. This section will, therefore, explore adoption in three aspects, and engage with modern debates around the subject.

3.1. The Cosmology of Adoption

3.1.1. The Sonship of the First Adam

In order to better understand the full significance of how believers are adopted in sonship to God we must first understand what they are adopted from. The concept of the pre-adoptive state of believers is complex in itself since it requires an exploration of the filial status of the first humans in both their prelapsarian and postlapsarian relationship to God — Are humans sons and daughters of God by nature? What becomes of their filial relationship because of the fall?

In attempting to articulate the filial relationship of humanity to God we first note that scholars employ a delineation of sonship as they describe filial relation to God. These can be collectively summarised in three terms: creative sonship, theocratic sonship, and legal sonship¹⁸⁹ — Creative sonship is derived by generation; theocratic sonship is determined by characteristic filial disposition and holiness; and legal sonship is conferred by adoption. However, whilst these distinctions are helpful, they invest the concept of sonship with a modal function. Instead, these “types” of sonship would be better understood not as modes of filial *being*, but as manners of filial *entrance*; that is, they do not themselves qualify, in each case, the *nature* of sonship (which, as we will argue later, should be held to be qualitatively defined by obedience) but articulate the *mechanism* by which the filial relationship is entered into and established. As Hulse argues, ‘adoption strictly speaking refers to the actual transition from being an alien to being a son, while sonship points

¹⁸⁹ Whaling, ‘Adoption,’ 224. Burke, *Family*, 89. Milton, *Doctrine*, 13-14. Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 189-191. c.f. Webb, *Doctrine*, 31.

more to the relationship itself.¹⁹⁰ With this procedural caveat in mind we may now ask whether humans are created as sons and daughters of God, and, if the relation exists, does it only exist by entrance of creative generation or by the mechanisms of theocratic or adoptive sonship?

Candlish posits the idea that humanity was not by virtue of their divinely wrought creation automatically sons of God. Candlish held that God was naturally supreme over all creation, but this supremacy did not implicitly necessitate his natural paternity of humanity.¹⁹¹ He argues that such a relationship would demand God be responsible for the protection and welfare of his created children.¹⁹² However, since he cannot detect these paternal phenomenon in God's dealing with humanity, he concludes that this relationship does not exist.¹⁹³ Thus, creative sonship is, for Candlish, not automatically derivative of creative generation, and, even if humans were to be taken as God's children, this would be distinct and extraneous to the creative aspect of their generation.¹⁹⁴

Candlish, however, goes on to argue that it is then by Christ's incarnation, as the Son of God, that the rest of humanity may claim identification as sons of God; a process of relational federalisation in which Christ's sonship is incorporated in his humanity, and thereby extended to all humans. He argues,

in the one undivided person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God come in the flesh, humanity enters into that very relation of sonship which, before his coming in the flesh, he sustains to the Father. ... The question is not a question about nature at all; *it is simply and exclusively a question of relationship*. The two natures, being distinct, and continuing to be distinct, may nevertheless, if united in one person, be embraced in one personal relationship.¹⁹⁵

Candlish rationalises this Christologically derived sonship of humanity through asserting that if Christ could partake in the human nature without it diminishing his eternal sonship to the Father, then the converse might also be true of humans; they could enter into the filial relationship to the Father through Christ.¹⁹⁶ However, Candlish requires a mechanism by which the rest of humanity is *effectively* introduced into this Christological sonship, and

¹⁹⁰ Hulse, 'Doctrine,' 6.

¹⁹¹ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 12-23.

¹⁹² Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 23.

¹⁹³ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 127.

¹⁹⁴ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 31.

¹⁹⁵ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 77. Emphasis mine.

¹⁹⁶ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 88.

that is where he locates the concepts of regeneration and adoption. By regeneration humanity may be introduced to the filial relationship, inwardly, and, by adoption, they may formally be brought into membership of the family.¹⁹⁷ In this way, Candlish denies the creative sonship of humanity but affirms a legal and theocratic sonship by the mechanisms of adoption and regeneration, respectively.

Against this claim, Garner assesses Candlish to be in error since he essentially blurs ‘the distinctions between *created* sonship and *redemptive* sonship.’¹⁹⁸ Garner highlights the redemptive process of adoption as something distinct from the creative process of generation, and then sustains the creative sonship of Adam. He notes, ‘the obligation of mankind to God is based on *relationship* to him in creation — created sons are to seek and to obey their Creator/Father.’¹⁹⁹ By highlighting the relational expectation of obedience due to creative sonship, Garner, thus, identifies creative Adamic sonship as something that is subjectively sustained rather than objectively bestowed through legal adoption due to incarnational federalisation.

Developing this concept of paternal-filial relationality, Crawford then argues, of the Father, that

we are not bound to show that the relation which He bears to them is literally and exactly a relation of paternity, strictly the same with that of an earthly parent to his offspring, but only that it is a *really subsisting relation*, of which that of paternity is the most appropriate type.²⁰⁰

Webb agrees, and observes that a filial disposition towards the Father naturally occurs in the human spirit,²⁰¹ and that Adam himself was ‘treated by God as if he were a son.’²⁰² Moreover, the concept of the *imago Dei* provides us with the strongest evidence for the “really subsisting relation” of sonship that Crawford speaks of. Webb, Garner, and Trumper, all find that the concept of the *imago Dei* provides a relational context to the creative act, which indicates a dynamic of paternity. As Garner argues, ‘how better to define those

¹⁹⁷ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 221-2.

¹⁹⁸ Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 171. Emphasis mine.

¹⁹⁹ Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 171-2. Emphasis original.

²⁰⁰ Crawford, *Fatherhood*, 11. Emphasis original. Girardeau agrees. Girardeau, *Discussions*, 433.

²⁰¹ Webb, *Doctrine*, 33. Webb further contends that humanity naturally possesses both the relational markers of being *sons* and *servants* of God. For detailed discussions regarding the relationship between Adamic sonship and servanthood see: Webb, *Doctrine*, 32-47. Girardeau, *Discussions*, 464.

²⁰² Webb, *Doctrine*, 58. Trumper agrees. Trumper, ‘Historical,’ 80. Webb also presents NT references in Luke 3:38 where the genealogy of Jesus explicitly notes that Adam was the “son of God;” and the mention of the filial relation in Paul’s address to the Areopagus (Acts 17). Webb, *Doctrine*, 47-54.

relational dimensions of the created being with his Creator than in terms of Father/son language? Men and women, created as children in God's image, are ... to relate with one another and with their Father/Creator.'²⁰³

Therefore, regardless of the mode of entry into the filial state, we may begin to understand *sonship* in its most fundamental nature as something qualitative, rather than only generative — sonship is not to be identified, in principle, by observation of filial establishment, but by observation of filial, relational phenomenon, that is, the manifest character of obedience. Thus, human sonship to God, must also be identified through observation of filial-paternal relational phenomenon. Retrospectively, we see how at Adam's creation he had not yet manifest his filial quality, though he had opportunity to, and so he could not yet be deemed a son, proper.²⁰⁴ And yet, because of the divine source of his creative genesis, and the marks of paternity that God displays for Adam and Eve through creating a world designed for their inhabitance,²⁰⁵ it is clear that humans may claim a *constitutive* sonship by virtue of these creative and theocratic markers.²⁰⁶ Thus, whilst we cannot say that they are sons and daughters outright, their creative ontology, and God's paternal relationality grants them a sonship in the minority.²⁰⁷ In this manner, we thus argue for the reality of Adam's filial *entrance* and establishment, but not his filial obedience or confirmation.²⁰⁸ His sonship still required the manifestation of qualitative obedience, as Garner observes,

The first Adam was created within an eschatological environment, whereby through his obedience to the covenant of works he would attain the divine goal of creation for himself and for those whom he represented. The very nature of the covenantal obligations bestowed on him conveys a probationary period for obedience, at the end of which he would attain his intended glorification, moving him and his progeny into the fullness of covenant blessing.²⁰⁹

Adam's divine, creative origin thus gives him claim to a constitutional sonship to God, but this is only the means of his entrance into sonship — the filial *relationship* must be proven and confirmed through filial *obedience*.

²⁰³ Garner, 'Adoption,' 180. Others agree. Webb, *Doctrine*, 58. Trumper, 'Historical,' 80.

²⁰⁴ Murray, *Writings*, 225.

²⁰⁵ Murray, *Redemption*, 142. Witsius, *Economy*, 448. Crawford, *Fatherhood*, 17.

²⁰⁶ Mullins, *Religion*, 404.

²⁰⁷ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 464. c.f. Israel's own minority sonship in Gal. 4:1-2.

²⁰⁸ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 467.

²⁰⁹ Garner, *Sons*, 255.

3.1.2. Hamartiology of Adoption — The Disobedience of the Created Son

Having established the constitutional sonship of Adam and Eve, we may now consider what affect their sin had on their filial status. As surmised, Adam's constitutional sonship required confirmation through a manifestation of filial obedience — his behaviour needed to correspond to the will of his Father in order to qualify the authenticity of his filial relationship.²¹⁰

Webb explains this probationary nature of Adam's sonship when he states,

Man began his career as, at once, the subject and the son of God; as a member of the divine kingdom on the one hand, and as a member of the divine household on the other. ... In both relations man was put upon probation: his standing in God's paternal regard was tested at the same time and in the same manner in which his standing in God's magisterial favor was put upon trial. ... After the fall, the sinner's status is precisely that of a proscribed and outlawed citizen of the kingdom, and a banished and disinherited son of the house of God.²¹¹

By his filial disobedience Adam failed to fulfil his filial obligations during the time of his probationary sonship. As such, Adam's "loss" of filial *status*²¹² is better understood as a failed accomplishment of filial *quality*. He remains, constitutively, a son, but his sonship is rendered inauthentic.²¹³

We may here consider here what dynamic change would have occurred to approve the sonship of Adam had he been successful in demonstrating filial obedience, as Ferguson asks, was Adam already 'a son of God or was (he) intended to be adopted as a son following a period of testing in Eden'?²¹⁴ That is, would his constitutional sonship simply have remain unchanged, or would obedience have triggered some device of paternal approval, and would this act have been considered as an act of adoption? In response Witsius' observes that an approved sonship would have merited the bestowal of inheritance — '1. God created Adam. 2. In his own image. 3. Eminently loved him. 4. Gave him dominion over the creatures. For these reasons he is deservedly called the son of God,

²¹⁰ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 453.

²¹¹ Webb, *Doctrine*, 20.

²¹² As Pope identifies. Pope, *Compendium*, 502.

²¹³ Garner, *Sons*, 117.

²¹⁴ Ferguson, 'Doctrine,' 84. c.f. Webb, *Doctrine*, 80.

*though God had not yet declared him heir of his peculiar blessings.*²¹⁵ Witsius, thus, helpfully distinguishes between the concept of constitutional sonship as a mode of entry into the filial relationship, with the concept of obedient sonship as something qualified by the granting of inheritance — obedient *son-ship* results in approved *heir-ship* (Gal. 4:7; Rom. 8:16-17).²¹⁶ As such, Adam would not have undergone adoption to approved sonship if he had obeyed,²¹⁷ since he had already entered into sonship by creation, but his already constitutional sonship would have been promoted to the higher status of heir.

Instead, the created son's disobedience led to the failure of his progress towards heirship, and led to the imperfection of his filial image.²¹⁸ Whaling describes the situation as such:

By his fall Adam lost his spiritual sonship or the moral image of God and became "corrupt according to the delightful lusts"; he lost also his legal sonship, or title in law to God's fatherly favor; but he retained his natural sonship which is an inalienable possession which can never lapse.²¹⁹

That is, Adam, by his sin, could still claim to being a constituted son of God by creation,²²⁰ but repudiated his theocratic paternity, and lost any claim to having exercised perfect filial piety. Consequentially, all who follow in Adam's progeny, as the first created, human, son of God, now fall under the same corruption of filial image, 'universal depravity through solidarity with Adam in his sin has not eradicated the divine filial imprint, but ruined it.'²²¹ This perversion means that sinful humanity can no longer effectively fulfil the obligations of filial obedience,²²² and, since perfect obedience is no longer possible, the confirmation of sonship to the status of heir is no longer available to fallen humanity.²²³

²¹⁵ Witsius, *Economy*, 448. Emphasis mine. c.f. Webb, *Doctrine*, 80. Webb contends that the fall led to the removal of Adam's inheritance, but we agree with Witsius and hold that this inheritance was yet to be granted.

²¹⁶ As Scott, Cosgrove, and Watson argue in our investigation of Gal. 4:7 and Rom. 8:16-17.

²¹⁷ Contra Webb. Webb, *Doctrine*, 80.

²¹⁸ Crawford, *Fatherhood*, 140.

²¹⁹ Whaling, 'Adoption,' 224.

²²⁰ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 471.

²²¹ Garner, 'Adoption,' 169. See also: Webb, *Doctrine*, 84. Corniche, 'Adoption,' 74.

²²² Garner, 'Adoption,' 170.

²²³ Webb, *Doctrine*, 91. Murray, *Writings*, 225. Girardeau, *Discussions*, 465.

3.1.3. The Pre-Adoptive State — The Enslavement of Adam’s Descendants

Despite the simplicity of the identification of the unachieved obedience of Adam notions of the resultant pre-adoptive filial status of humanity become harder to establish within the scheme of soteriological adoption. Although Adam and his progeny may no longer claim any title of heirship and inheritance due to sin, what becomes of their relational standing before God with particular regard to Pauline adoption?

Senna describes the state as that of “orphan”: ‘God seeks to adopt His orphaned children as a reflection of His nature.’²²⁴ This is most likely drawn from John 14:18. However it too quickly draws on contemporary notions of adoption as a charitable practice of providing a family for parentless children, and conflates a Johannine framework of sonship with Pauline *huiiothesia*. When we consider Paul’s synthetic huiiothesian source we see that adoption was usually enacted upon adults who already belonged to another family, rather than parentless children. Thus, the concept of orphan, whilst retaining great pastoral value in describing the loss of filial identity, thematically falls outside of a Pauline huiiothesian model of soteriology.

Alternatively, Stetina describes the relationship as one of “enemy” to God when he says, ‘Originally God was the common Father of humans and angels. However, this intended relationship was forfeited when humans turned from being God’s obedient children to being God’s enemies through sin. ... when the “natural” sonship was forfeited.’²²⁵ However, the notion of enemy fails to identify a thematically familial dynamic, and again describes a spiritual orientation that is thematically pastoral rather than functionally soteriological in a schema of adoption.

Instead, two other distinct descriptors of the pre-adoptive state may be derived from the huiiothesian background that thematically correspond to the metaphorical context adoption — those of “sonship to Satan,” and “enslavement to sin.”

Several scholars describe the filial identity of sinful humanity as one of sonship to Satan.²²⁶ Girardeau indicatively puts it as such: ‘adoption supposes the previous existence of the adopted in the family of the devil. Jesus said to his opponents, "Ye are of your father the devil." Paul denounces Elymas as a "child of the devil.”’²²⁷ Lloyd-Jones agrees when he

²²⁴ Senna, ‘Doctrine,’ 81.

²²⁵ Stetina, *Fatherhood*, 63.

²²⁶ Stibbe, *Orphans*, 31. Houston, *Adoption*, 45. Owen, *Works*, 207. Dewalt, ‘View,’ 51.

²²⁷ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 469.

states, "There is no meaning in the doctrine of adoption unless it is our basic and fundamental postulate that every man by nature of a "child of wrath", as Paul puts it in Ephesians 2:3.²²⁸ Whilst these descriptions vary qualitatively in their identification of Satan as "father," the common emphasis is on the identification of a paternal relationship that is sinister in nature.²²⁹ As such, the notion of filiation to the devil provides one thematically integral way of understanding the pre-adoptive state, given that it corresponds to Paul's huiiothesian concept of the *patria potestas* within the Roman context (c.f. Eph. 1:3-5, Rom. 8:15-16.). — Prior to their adoption, believers find themselves under the authority of the devil as their *patria potestas*,²³⁰ and are influenced to obey his will rather than that of their creative father.

Secondly, the concept of enslavement to sin or under the power of the law provides a Semetically founded perspective of the pre-adoptive state (Gal. 4:4-7). Smail comments, 'We used to be slaves who were under the condemnation of the law and outside the realm of the Holy Spirit.'²³¹ The sons by constitution, denied of any claim to heirship by their familial heritage in disobedient Adam and their own disobedience, now find themselves enslaved to the demands of the Father in the law, due to the corruption of their filial image, and find themselves in need of a saviour who can not only restore their image of sonship, but confirm it to one of perfected obedience and worthiness of inheritance.²³²

²²⁸ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 154.

²²⁹ Beeke, quoting Marshall, notes 'By nature ... we are "Children of wrath, Children of Belial, Children of old Adam, Children of Sin and Death."' Beeke, *Heirs*, loc. 1105.

²³⁰ Stibbe, *Orphans*, 31.

²³¹ Smail, *Father*, 145. c.f. Peterson, *Adopted*, 70. Burke, *Message*, 26.

²³² Theron, 'Adoption,' 10

3.2. The Soteriology of Adoption — Salvation through Trinitarian Relationality

Having established the nature of humanity's sonship as constitutional by creation, the failure of this sonship because of Adam's disobedience and the ongoing disobedience of his progeny, we now consider the outworking of adoption in the salvation of believers.

3.2.1. *Huiothesia* — Trinitarian Relationality

Assessing Paul's overarching concept of *huiothesia*, Heim notes,

the framework of the *υιοθεσία* metaphors in Romans 8 creates the perception of the Father as the initiator of adoption, the Spirit as the witness, and the Son as their elder brother and co-heir. Thus the framework created by *υιοθεσία* highlights the involvement of the whole Trinity in bringing the believer into the intimate relationship of sonship.²³³

Salvific adoption is, thus, essentially a process of relational transformation — believers have their familial relationships changed from one set to another, thereby radically reforming their very identity due to their incorporation into an, essentially, new and perfected filial dynamic with the Father. As such, the biblical concept of adoption is not merely a change in one's social context, but a transformation of one's entire interpersonal relationships as one is integrated into full membership of God's household.²³⁴ As Ziegler observes,

What if being a child of God is not simply being checked into the orphanage of the church, but being adopted into the family of the Trinity? Adoption does not simply create a new set of one-on-one relationships; it constitutes a dynamic fellowship in the communion of life and love.²³⁵

Soteriological adoption, then, is Trinitarian in nature, effected by, and for, the purpose of transformative relationality of the adoptee to the Trinitarian persons.

Reviewing a question raised from our study of Athanasius, we ask: are believers adopted by the entire Trinity, or only to the Father?

²³³ Heim, 'Light,' 239.

²³⁴ Berkhof, *Theology*, 516.

²³⁵ Ziegler, 'Adoption,' 21-22.

Murray develops this inquiry when he considers,

Is it God viewed as the three persons of the trinity or is it specifically God the Father?
And when the people of God address God as Father, whom are they addressing? Is it
the Godhead ... or is it the Father?²³⁶

In response, Murray observes that since Christ himself identifies his Father as the same Father of the disciples (John 20:17) it must, therefore, be the First Person of the Trinity who adopts.²³⁷

In contrast, Houston suggests that the notion of divine adoption may be ascribed to the entire Godhead, whilst distinguishing the distinct economical relationships that each Trinitarian person has with the believer in the outworking of adoption.²³⁸ As such, believers are adopted into God's family, but each of the divine persons plays a distinct role in achieving that work, and so it may rightly be said that not only are we adopted *to* the Father, but adopted *by* the Son, and *through* the Holy Spirit.

To reinforce this dynamic, we may, again, observe the notion that adoption is only a means of entrance into what must be held as the teleological status of sonship. To be an adoptee is, simply, to define the mode of entrance into the familial relation, but the filial relation itself is constitutive of familial relationality to the entire Godhead, since the whole Godhead is personally involved in the act. Houston succinctly introduces this Trinitarian effort when he states,

The First Cause, or the Adopter, was the Eternal Father, to whom it was befitting to have the saved standing in the relation of sons. The second person of the Godhead, the proper and only-begotten Son of God, had the elect given him, to be redeemed, to bear his image, and to be "many sons" to be brought "to glory." (Hebrews 2:10) And the blessed Spirit is himself "the Spirit of adoption," by whose agency they are brought into the family, by whom they are led, and whose inward witness attests their sonship.²³⁹

²³⁶ Murray, *Redemption*, 144.

²³⁷ Murray qualifies his claim to avoid the interpretation that believers' sonship is identical to Christ's eternal sonship - 'The relation of God as Father to the Son must not be equated, of course, with the relation of God as Father to men. Eternal generation must not be equated with adoption.' Murray, *Redemption*, 147.

²³⁸ Houston, *Adoption*, 65. In his experimental treatise, Houston suggests that the notion of divine paternity could be ascribed to all three persons of the Trinity. Whilst ontologically questionable, his resultant economy of Trinitarian adoption is utilised here.

²³⁹ Houston, *Adoption*, 46. Others provide corroborating summaries: Peterson, 'Theology,' 121. Braeutigam, 'God,' 173.

The result is an understanding that the Pauline *huiotesia* concept is wholly Trinitarian mechanism by its paternal causality, Christological actuality, and pneumatic particularity.²⁴⁰ Having established this Trinitarian framework, let us now turn to more closely consider the role of each divine person in the act of salvific adoption.

3.2.2. Adoption Paterology — The Father of A New Family

Having argued for the constitutional sonship of humanity, and the fundamental nature of sonship as determined by its mode of entrance, but rather upon its relational phenomenology of filial obedience, we may now ask the correlative question: what is the Father's relationship to humanity?

If humans may enter into sonship to God by creative, theocratic, and adoptive means, then, correspondingly, God may enter into a creative, theocratic, or adoptive paternity of his creatures. Garner further investigates this notion when he argues, 'God is the Father creatively, theocratically, and adoptively, *because he eternally is Father*. This eternal fatherly character is proven by the eternal sonship of Christ.'²⁴¹ Of particular importance for us, Garner establishes the First Person of the Trinity's paternal relationship to humanity based on his paternal relationality towards the Son. That is, it is not by the Son's mode of entrance into his filial relationship to the Father (since this relationship is eternally begotten) that establishes the Father's paternity, but by the dynamic relationship that exists between the two persons as, manifestly, paternal and filial. Applying this paradigm anthropologically, Garner continues,

Hence, to insist that God is *only* the Father of Israel in a collective sense (Exod 4) and *only* of his adopted children in the New Testament in a gloriously individual and corporate sense is to neglect the ontological basis for this reality.²⁴²

What Garner means is that the mode of entrance into his paternity is not what determines the nature of that paternity, but rather that his eternal paternity of the Son is where we may observe the fundamental nature of his paternity to *any* son he is father of — the ontological basis of his eternal economic paternity to the Son reveals the foundational dynamic of his paternal manifestation in all of his paternal relationships. Thus, divine sonship is sonship not because of the modal entrance of sonship, but due to the character of the Father, as Father. Therefore, as believers enter into sonship by adoption, what makes

²⁴⁰ Smail, *Father*, 145.

²⁴¹ Garner, 'Adoption,' 192. Emphasis original.

²⁴² Garner, 'Adoption,' 192. Emphasis original.

their sonship (but not their nature) equivalent to Christ's own sonship is because they now possess a filial relationship to the same Father as Christ.²⁴³ Their mode of entrance into the relation is *different*, since theirs is by adoption, whilst Christ's is an eternally begotten sonship, but, since their Father is the same, their sonship is nonetheless an equivalent relationship of sonship in regard to its paternal reference.²⁴⁴

If the constitutional sonship required confirmation through obedience then the reciprocal might also be demanded — that the constitutional paternity required testing. However, as Webb observes,

God can be called the Father of men because he always remains actually in his relations to men what he is *ideally*; whereas men must become sons of God because they are not actually what they are ideally; ... it is on their side that the ideal relation has been impaired; on their side, therefore, must it be restored.²⁴⁵

God's paternal love for and to his human children has always been manifest. Thus, the paternity of God towards humankind remains *constitutionally* unchanged by the fall, just as humanity's sonship to God remains constitutionally grounded by their creative entrance into the filial relationship. However, whilst the paternal *relationship* remains constitutionally unchanged, filial disobedience means that the Father's expression of love towards humanity is rejected by his constitutional sons, resulting in his 'parental indignation'²⁴⁶ — this rejection is disobedience on their part, and acceptance of the father's love must be restored in order to also bring about not only the restoration, but the possibility of the consummation of paternal relationality of the father²⁴⁷ — that is, within the schema of adoption, the father's declaration of heirship, and promise of inheritance upon his obedient children. Without obedient sonship, the Father cannot perfectly express his love through bestowing inheritance.

Thus, within Paul's adoptive framework, the Father, out of his ongoing love, protologically wills the adoption of the elect before time (as discussed from Eph. 1:3-5), an act which Burke identifies as

²⁴³ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 218.

²⁴⁴ Garner notes, 'that Paul uses *huios* for Christ and *huios* and *huiiothesia* for the redeemed intends to accentuate solidarity and shared filial identity ... rather than dissimilarity.' Garner, *Sons*, 204

²⁴⁵ Webb, *Doctrine*, 85. Emphasis mine.

²⁴⁶ Webb, *Doctrine*, 158.

²⁴⁷ Webb, *Doctrine*, 158.

the sole prerogative of our Father-God. ... the term, “predestine” does not connote a cold, calculated act of God whereby he arbitrarily decided to pick out some and cast aside other. Quite the opposite, because Paul here qualifies “predestine” with the prepositional phrase “in love” (*en agapē*) to underscore the Father’s deep affection in “marking us out” as his adopted sons.²⁴⁸

Here we see how, in distinction from a purely forensic schema of salvation, a paterology of adoption emphasises God’s paternally affectionate heart for the salvation of his lost children, and to reestablish himself as a loving *paterfamilias* of his household.²⁴⁹ As such, we may determine that it is the initiative will of the Father to graciously adopt the elect that provides the *efficient cause* of adoption.²⁵⁰ As Smail concludes, ‘the love and the grace of God were not the *results* of atonement but its *preconditions* in the heart of the Father. The obedience of the Son in this supreme instance, as in all others, is subordinate response to the initiating will of the Father.’²⁵¹

3.2.3. Adoption Christology — Christ The Obedient Son

3.2.3.1. *The Meritorious Cause of Adoption (I) - The Incarnation of the Obedient Son*

As the Father wills the salvation of the elect through adoptive grace, the Son is therefore sent into the world to achieve obedience and provide a way for Christologically actualised adoption. As Burke highlights, ‘Paul’s understanding of *huiiothesia* is both Christocentrically and Christologically grounded in the person and work of Jesus Christ’²⁵² (Gal. 4:4-5).

However, before we consider the Christological work of Christ in achieving adoption we must first consider the Christocentric dilemma of his incarnate sonship. As Aquinas asks of us: given the nature of Christ’s sonship as both the eternally begotten Son, and as a man, with a constitutional sonship in his humanity, how do we reconcile the notion the Christ, by his incarnation, may have, thus, possessed “two sonships?” Critically, are believers, by adoption, also brought into the same nature of sonship that Christ possesses in his eternal nature?

²⁴⁸ Burke, *Family*, 75-7.

²⁴⁹ Burke, *Family*, 83.

²⁵⁰ As from biblical reflection. Trumper, ‘Exposition (I),’ 66. Braeutigam, ‘Adopted,’ 166.

²⁵¹ Smail, *Father*, 130. Emphasis mine.

²⁵² Burke, *Family*, 41.

As we explored earlier, Candlish attempts to resolve the conundrum by asserting that in his human nature Jesus is not constituted as a son of God but only a servant, and that it is only by 'being one person, combining in himself both natures, he is at once both son and subject.'²⁵³ For Candlish, humanity's introduction into the filial relation is, therefore, the function of adoption — to unite humanity to the person of Christ, who, through his union of natural sonship and servanthood, then brings believers into adoptive sonship. This, we argued, wrongly held that humanity is not constitutively made sons by their creative generation, and fails to consider the nature of sonship as something that is qualitatively marked by filial obedience. Applied Christologically, the *qualitative* sonship of the eternal Son to the Father may, thus, be considered the same as that of Jesus to the Father, since it is marked by a *character* of filial obedience and not by mode of filial entrance. Christ is indeed the eternal Son of the Father, which remains unchanged by his incarnation, and his human sonship does not need to be derived from his being eternally begotten of the Father, but can rely entirely on his sharing in the Adamic constitutional sonship by creation. What "unites" both of these modes of sonships is, therefore, the identical manifestation of filial obedience — that is, the manifest filial relationality of the human Jesus is identical to that of the eternal son of the Father in its obedient nature, and his status of sonship is, therefore, identical in its ontological nature as divine and human.²⁵⁴ As such, Christ does not possess "two sonships," but manifests his *characteristic quality* as son, in both of his natures, through his singular, personal obedience. As Garner concludes, 'Christ, as the perfect image of God (Col 1:15), represents sonship in its ontological and archetypal font, and by his perfect coalescence with the economic purposes of the Father, exemplifies the filial obedience which intrinsically characterizes sonship.'²⁵⁵

To be sure, Christ's *particular* filial relationship to the Father remains personally distinct from the believer's despite their constitutive and adoptive entrance into sonship. As Gal. 4:4-6 attests, 'Jesus apparently understood himself to have a unique Sonship relation with God which permitted him to distinguish between his relationship with God as his Father and that of his disciples.'²⁵⁶ This, Wanamaker asserts, is precisely why Paul selects the metaphor of adoption in his adoptive soteriology, since it 'has the effect of differentiating the believer's sonship from that of Christ's. His sonship appears to be direct, unmediated,

²⁵³ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 86.

²⁵⁴ Smail, *Father*, 120. c.f. Garner, who locates Christ's obedience primarily to 'Christ's filial fidelity (function), not primarily to the self-consciousness of his eternal sonship or the hypostatic union (ontology), though he assuredly (and mysteriously) possessed such self-consciousness as well.' Garner, *Sons*, 200. Emphasis original.

²⁵⁵ Garner, 'Adoption,' 216. Emphasis mine.

²⁵⁶ Wanamaker, 'Son,' 284. Wanamaker further highlights the distinction when he notes Paul's use of Jesus's "my Father", and "your Father" sayings. Wanamaker, 'Son,' 287-93.

and natural in contrast to the sonship experienced by Christians.²⁵⁷ Christ, throughout eternity, remains the Son, whilst believers are made sons of God by adoption.

Having assessed the foundational nature of Christ's personal sonship by obedience, we may then see that the incarnation itself is not enough to achieve adoption.²⁵⁸ As Garner argues,

eternal sonship ... does not in itself possess redemptive characteristics. Redemption required incarnation. ... This genetic solidarity with mankind establishes the historical and ontological grounds for his soteric efficacy ... but though his incarnation serves redemption, in a static sense it remains insufficient. The hypostatic union, as essential as it is to the gospel, does not save sinners. If it were indeed so, Christ's suffering would be incidental, superfluous, even cruel. ... [rather] what he *did* and what he *accomplished* as man served the soteriological ends.²⁵⁹

That is, whilst the incarnation provides the foundational possibility of Christ's redemptive work to represent human effort, it still requires Christ to *be* obedient as a human son, — 'The primary soteriological point is *that* Christ obeyed as the suffering Son, and that by his obedience in life and death, he *became* qualified in his resurrection as the ever-interceding Savior of sinners.'²⁶⁰ Indeed, it is the very notion that Christ *suffered* in his obedience that marks his filial relationality as perfectly obedient — his meritorious works are not merely confined to the duties of filial compliance, but enhanced by his submission to the paternal demand to even suffer undeserved death for the sake of the adoptive mission (Phil. 2:8), and to suffer the consequences of disobedience even though he himself never disobeyed as a son.²⁶¹ As Smail asserts,

The cross is atoning and saving precisely because on it God offers to God the obedience that is appropriate to us, out of the midst of the human situation into which he has entered wholly and with which he has identified himself completely.²⁶²

Thus, in soteriological adoption, it is not Christ's particular relationship of Son which is imparted to believers, since, by his divine nature, this is ontologically rooted in both his

²⁵⁷ Wanamaker, 'Son,' 342. Burke agrees. Burke, *Family*, 117.

²⁵⁸ Burke, *Family*, 118.

²⁵⁹ Garner, *Sons*, 197. Emphasis original.

²⁶⁰ Garner, *Sons*, 218. Emphasis original.

²⁶¹ Houston, *Adoption*, 59. Whaling labels Christ's obedient work here as the 'procuring cause' of adoption. Whaling, 'Adoption,' 226.

²⁶² Smail, *Father*, 125.

human sonship *and* his Trinitarian Sonship,²⁶³ but it is his *character* of manifest filial *obedience* (Gal. 4:4) that is imparted to believers. This apprehension of obedient character is what is perceived by the Father as fulfilment of the demands of their own constitutional sonship (v.5). Their obedient nature then renders them worthy of the adoption as sons. This adoption is, then, following Wanamaker's position in our biblical exploration, *both* juridically founded, *and* relationally constitutive; actualised by the sonship of Christ, as the obedient son of God,²⁶⁴ whereby the quality of Christ's filial work is substituted to believers,²⁶⁵ and renders them further worthy of the filial qualification as *perfect* sons, that is, the confirmation of heirship (v.6).²⁶⁶

Thus, adoption provides salvation not only through filial restoration, but filial approval through union with the perfected, *obedient-sonship* of Christ.²⁶⁷ Through faith, believers are brought into union with Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit,²⁶⁸ and that union is what allows the meritorious character of Christ's obedience to be effectively imparted to believers for their salvation through adoption.²⁶⁹ As Kim asserts 'The dwelling of the Spirit of Christ in us makes us participants in Christ's Sonship because it means the dwelling of Christ himself, the Son of God, in us, the Spirit being the mode of Christ's dwelling in us.'²⁷⁰ By the Spirit's indwelling, the image of sonship that was formerly corrupted is once again restored in the believer; 'That image, shattered as a result of the first son of God, Adam, has been put together and restored to the even greater image of Jesus, God's perfect Son.'²⁷¹ As a result, union with Christ is what grants believers membership of the divine family through the provision of adoption, and once again reinstates the Father's paternal affections towards the believer.

²⁶³ Webb, *Doctrine*, 109. Garner clarifies, 'union with Christ creates no absorption into or ontological participation in the hypostatic union; union involves no appropriation of divine attributes by the redeemed.' Garner, *Sons*, 252.

²⁶⁴ Smail, *Once*, 100.

²⁶⁵ Girardeau notes, 'What was conditional in Christ's case is unconditional in that of his people. His perfect obedience as a Son is by the Father transferred to their account.' Girardeau, *Discussions*, 491.

²⁶⁶ Wanamaker, 'Son,' 337-8.

²⁶⁷ Trumper, 'Historical,' 81. Braeutigam, 'Adopted,' 167.

²⁶⁸ Trumper qualifies the nature of this adoptive union: 'As real as is this union, it is neither symbiotic (deifying the sons of God and humanising the Son) nor ontological (admitting us entrance to the Godhead). ... While they share with Christ an identity of relation to the Father, he remains forever the firstborn Son (*primus inter pares*).' Trumper, 'Exposition (I),' 72-3.

²⁶⁹ Burke, 'Characteristics,' 70. Trumper, 'Import (II),' 104. Houston, *Adoption*, 49. Whaling, 'Adoption,' 230.

²⁷⁰ Kim, *Origin*, 317.

²⁷¹ Burke, *Message*, 30.

3.2.3.2. *The Meritorious Cause of Adoption (II) - The Resurrection of the Obedient Son*

In proposing the obedient nature of Christ's life as the son of God, and his death in vicarious substitution of disobedient humanity, we must now consider what function Christ's resurrection plays in the schema of soteric adoption. Does Christ's resurrection form the basis of his own adoption by God,²⁷² in approval of his filial piety; or is his resurrection only a proclamation of his already obedient nature, and an establishment of his status as heir? Crucially, does the adoption of believers rely on Christ's own resurrection-adoption to sonship or can soteriological adoption rely on the obedient death of Christ for salvation, and then rely on the prototype of Christ's filial approval and resurrection-heirship for the believer's own hope for future glorification and inheritance?

Following the foundational understanding of believers' adoption being based upon Christ's lived obedience, as opposed to his ontological Sonship as the eternally begotten Son, scholars posit the logic that Christ must have been adopted himself, at his resurrection, in order for believers to also be adopted through their own eschatological resurrection.²⁷³ Proponents for this argument point to two key texts. Firstly, they link the soteriological formula of Gal. 4:4-6, to the messianic formula of 2 Sam. 7:12-14, arguing that

τὴν υἰοθεσίαν in Gal. 4:5 must refer to the Jewish eschatological expectation based on 2 Sam. 7:14. ... (which) contains a demonstrable Adoption Formula which subsequent Judaism applied not only to the Davidic Messiah but ... also to the eschatological people of God. Specifically, the 2 Sam. 7:14 tradition expects that, at the advent of the Messiah, God would restore them to a covenant relationship; and he would adopt them, *with the Messiah*, as his sons.²⁷⁴

That is, Christ is adopted in fulfilment of God's historical adoption of Israel, and this allows believers to be brought into the family of God by adoption into the Abrahamic family of faith. Consequently, Gaffin argues,

It is, then, not only meaningful but necessary to speak of the resurrection as the redemption of Christ. The resurrection is nothing if not his deliverance from the power and curse of death which was in force until the moment of being raised. ... The resurrection is the salvation of Jesus as the last Adam; it and no other event in his experience is the point of *his* transition from wrath to grace.²⁷⁵

²⁷² We stress here that the concept of Christ's resurrection-adoption in no way alludes to a doctrine of Adoptionism. See: Smail, *Father*, 75. Maurer, 'Adopted,' 320.

²⁷³ Stevenson-Moessner, *Spirit*, 93. Tse, *Assurance*, 23.

²⁷⁴ Scott, *Sons*, 268. Emphasis mine. c.f. Maurer, 'Adopted,' 322.

²⁷⁵ Gaffin, *Resurrection*, 116.

Christ's resurrection, here, is held to be the manifestation of his own salvation from death to life.²⁷⁶

Secondarily, they point to Rom. 1:3-4, interpreting the fact of Christ's resurrection as "the Son of God in power" to mean his adoption and appointment — as opposed to his declaration — as the Son of God.²⁷⁷ Thus, Garner argues,

Christ's resurrection *is* his adoption as the resurrected Son ... His adoption as Son of God occurs *at* and *because* of his resurrection. ... this Romans 1:3-4 declaration of adopting sonship is the redemptive-historical progress from humiliation to exaltation that qualified Jesus Christ as messianic Son. His resurrection, which marks his supreme transformation, qualifies him for this unrivalled sonship status and signifies his unprecedented glorified human constitution.²⁷⁸

Garner's claim is due to his identification that Christ was not, in his humanity, a perfected son of God — since his ontologically eternal sonship does not automatically invest him with perfected human sonship²⁷⁹ — and, therefore, his sonship needed to be tested and then approved by an act of adoption in order to make believers' adoption a consequent possibility. In this manner, Christ's resurrection-adoption, for Garner, is not his *entrance* into a new filial status, but the *development* of his existing filial status from untested, to perfected. He argues, 'Sonship is ontological, eternal, and archetypal; it is also functional, regal, ectypal, temporal, and eschatological. It is no *less* than divine and eternal, but in Christ's mediatorial capacity, sonship is also no less than *humanly* developmental.'²⁸⁰ Here, however, we see Garner differentiate Christ's characteristic obedience in his functional and mediatorial mission — these are not modes of entrance into Christ's filial status, but thematic objectives of his obedient work. Thus, for Garner, obedient sonship itself has intermittent levels, or phases, of absolute quality,²⁸¹ and Christ's perfectly manifest obedience results in his manifest filial confirmation through resurrection-adoption.

²⁷⁶ Gaffin puts it as, 'Jesus' resurrection is his justification.' Gaffin, *Resurrection*, 123.

²⁷⁷ Gaffin, *Resurrection*, 117-8. Gaffin makes this conclusion based on the use and translation of other instances of *orizo* elsewhere (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; Heb. 4:7, amongst others), and identifies the declarative verb to possess a constitutive force.

²⁷⁸ Garner, *Sons*, 196. Emphasis original.

²⁷⁹ Garner stresses that he does not predicate Christ's sonship absolutely upon his resurrection, rather, 'Christ's human sonship experience is only properly predicated upon his antecedent divine sonship.' Gaffin, 'Divine,' 147.

²⁸⁰ Garner, *Sons*, 195. c.f. Bent, *What*, 91.

²⁸¹ Elsewhere, Gaffin and Garner, hold to a union of Christ's sonship in its ontological *and* functional nature when they assert, '[we] reject the *either-or* approach and embrace the *both-and* approach concerning Christ's eternal *and* attained sonship.' Gaffin, 'Divine,' 150. Emphasis original.

These two points together form the basis of the notion of the *resurrection-adoption* of Christ — Christ himself must be rescued from death in order to qualify his own messianic role, and his resurrection must in some real sense act as a mechanism of divine affirmation through adoption in order to make his now perfected developmental sonship available to believers as their own adoption.

Against this position, Trumper, firstly, argues against the idea that ‘Christ could have two sonships (the one natural, the other adopted) on the basis that sonship adheres to the person and not the nature.’²⁸² Trumper’s own conclusion of Gal. 4:4-6 is what allows him to make the contention, arguing,

There, it is Christ’s death-redemption, not his resurrection-adoption, that secures the adoptive sonship of the redeemed. True, redemption could not be guaranteed without Christ’s resurrection, either in the now or the not yet (cf. Rom 8:22—23), but Paul clearly links our adoptive sonship to Christ’s redeeming of us from enslavement. Because, hermeneutically, we work from the clearer statement of Gal 4:4-5 to Rom 1:3-4.²⁸³

That is, adoption’s effective ground is not Christ’s resurrection-adoption, but his obedient-death. Supporting Trumper’s view, Maurer and Kaiser also assess from Rom. 1:3-4 that *horizein* ‘should be translated “appointed.” ... the change is not in the divine nature or in the Son’s relationship to the Father, *but in Christ’s role in redemptive history.*’²⁸⁴ Further, Burke assesses the phrase “in power” (*en dynamei*) to most likely be an adjectival qualifier of the term “Son of God.” The result is what Burke describes as

two phases or states of Jesus’ existence: whereas during the pre-resurrection era Jesus was the Son of God in weakness and humility, in the post-resurrection period he was appointed as the Son of God in power. ... [which] enables believers to become God’s adopted sons.²⁸⁵

Thus, Christ’s relational sonship to the Father does not undergo a development of filial *status* — from minority to majority — but of filial *function* — from redemptive-filial expectation, to redemptive-filial achievement — thereby providing the grounds for Christ’s appointment as heir over all things (Heb. 1:2),²⁸⁶ and believers’ hope for future heirship by

²⁸² Trumper, *Sons*, 207. Bent agrees. Bent, *What*, 96.

²⁸³ Trumper, *Sons*, 208.

²⁸⁴ Maurer, ‘Adopted,’ 332. Emphasis mine. Macleod agrees. Macleod, *Person*, 92

²⁸⁵ Burke, *Family*, 104.

²⁸⁶ Witsius, *Economy*, 448. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 421.

union with Christ's resurrection-sonship (Gal. 4:6). In so doing they reassess Scott's link between Gal. 4:4-6 and 2 Sam. 7:12-14 by observing a stronger hermeneutic relationship between 2 Sam. 7:12-14 and Rom. 1:3-4. Since 'Romans 1:3-4 is all about *identifying* Jesus as the Davidic Messiah (the adopted son of God) and, thus, the one who, on account of his resurrection, "*fulfils* the messianic expectation of the Old Testament,"²⁸⁷ and not about indicating his adoption *into* the messianic sonship.

In response to the notion that Christ's resurrection is the manifestation of his own redemption from the consequences of sin and death, we may draw a corollary from a doctrine of justification. Zaspel argues,

Christ's justification differs from ours in one very important way: his justification was not by imputation. No, *the ground of our Lord's justification was his very own righteousness*. He had no need of a substitute righteousness. And in his resurrection his vindication before God was declared to the world.²⁸⁸

Applied to the schema of adoption, we may view Christ's vindicating obedience as his own. He does not, indeed cannot, act as his own filial substitute — he is already the obedient-son and, thus, his resurrection forms not his filial development, but his filial revelation. At his resurrection, Christ is revealed to be the Son of God *in power*, inaugurating not a new phase of Christological sonship, but a new phase of Christ's filial mission, through the declaration of his *achievement* of the adoptive provision.²⁸⁹ As Kirk concludes of Christ's resurrection, 'Jesus is declared son of God, and believers receive the consummation of their adoption also at the resurrection ... the work of God for his chosen people is told in terms of the work of God for his resurrected Son.'²⁹⁰ The eschatological *form* of consummated adoption that believers wait expectantly for is, thus, given substance by Christ's resurrection body as approved son, and provides the basis of believers' future hope of their own resurrection as obedient sons and daughters, adopted because of their faith in conformation to the meritorious Son of God in power.

Fundamentally, Maurer and Kaiser disagree with Garner's application of "adoption" as speaking developmentally of Christ's sonship, arguing that 'Because the "person" of Christ is fundamentally the divine Son, this seems to imply a change in his divinity,'²⁹¹ if indeed he is adopted. Instead they define adoption strictly as 'the socio-legal process by which an

²⁸⁷ Maurer, 'Adopted,' 322. Emphasis mine.

²⁸⁸ Zaspel, 'Resurrection.' Emphasis mine.

²⁸⁹ Watson, *Paul*, 148.

²⁹⁰ Kirk, 'Appointed,' 242.

²⁹¹ Maurer, 'Adopted,' 331.

adoptee receives a new status and identity within a new family of which he or she did not originally belong.²⁹² Thus, in conclusion, they claim 'Adoption necessarily includes the notion of relational change of status between persons. ... This probably explains why Paul does not use *υιοθεσία*, or for that matter any word from its wider semantic field, as a description of Jesus's divine sonship.'²⁹³ The issue here is, in our opinion, then, one of semantics — if "adoption" is defined as the progress of filial maturity from imperfect to perfect; from a minority sonship to a majority sonship, then Garner and Gaffin's deployment of the term is acceptable. However, if adoption, strictly, means a transformational shift of one's familial identity through a re-identification of one's particular paternal relationship, and resultant familial membership, then Trumper, Maurer, and Kaiser are correct. Put another way, for Gaffin and Garner, Pauline *huiiothesia* is *consummative* in its function — that is, it does not create a new familial relationship, but elevates an *existing* relationship. Whilst for Maurer and Kieser, it is *transpositive* — that is, it creates a *different* familial relationship. Maurer and Kieser, thus, accuse Gaffin and Garner of arguing for a change in Christ's *constitutional* sonship, but what the latter really mean to communicate is a change in Christ's *functional* sonship in its developing mediatorial function. At the same time, however, Maurer and Kieser's emphasis on a relational sonship distracts them from perceiving a sense of qualitative mutability (development) in Christ's sonship as perceived by Gaffin and Garner who, in their own understanding of qualitative adoption being effected or qualified by a kind of "adoption," are correct. This, we argue, is where our conceptual locating of sonship not primarily in the manner of entrance (which only explains filial constitution), but by quality, (marked by performative filial obedience), becomes critical to our understanding of Christ's obedient death as son, and his resurrection as the revealed obedient-son. This is also precisely what makes adoption soteriological in nature: adoption is not limited to a dynamic of consummated filial expectation — from *potential* obedience to *achieved* obedience — but provides a dynamic of transformed filial *membership*, from enslavement to sin and filiation to Satan, to perfect filial acceptance and relationship to the Father.

In our opinion, then, we hold to a familial emphasis of adoption — soteriological adoption must result in a transpositional change of one's familial and relational ties, otherwise there is no need for "adoption" as such, and only a forensic or abstract justification. Garner and Gaffin's construction of a developmental sonship by way of Christ's resurrection is what necessitates their innovation of adoption as a Christocentric mechanism of developmental sonship. However, when we fully consider the nature of Christ's resurrection not as his

²⁹² Maurer, 'Adopted,' 326.

²⁹³ Maurer, 'Adopted,' 335. Emphasis mine. Burke also makes the observation that *huiiothesia* is never used of Jesus, noting the more general notion of sonship, not adoption, is what dominates Paul's understanding of Jesus's filial relationship. Burke, *Family*, 105-7.

own justification but as vindication of his already just person, we have no other recourse but to apply this same dynamic pattern between his obedience and his sonship. Resultantly, whilst, as we have argued, the believer's sonship, though entered into by adoption, is no different in nature to Christ's sonship in its character of obedience, his characteristic obedience is personally *achieved*, whilst ours is only personally *ascribed*. That distinction is also what makes Christ's sonship, whilst qualitatively equivalent, materially higher to the believer's filial status, and marks him out as worthy of the position of elder brother of the new family.²⁹⁴

3.2.3.3. *Covenantal Sonship - Christ the Mediator of Adoptive Obedience*

In order to authenticate the soteriological nature of adoption we may assess how a schema of adoption fits within a redemptive-historical framework of covenantal grace. Does the metaphorical concept of believers' adoption correlate with a biblical theology of covenant, as revealed through God's relationship with Israel, and the revelation of Christ as the achiever and mediator of covenantal fulfilment?

Garner identifies the notion of soteriological adoptive grace as consummative of Israel's covenantal relationship to God when he observes,

the idea of Israel's sonship first emerges in the national deliverance from Egypt, and ... this corporate sonship served as a typological shadow of eschatologically realized adoptive sonship through the messianic (antitypical) Son. ... This promised consummating sonship, more clearly unfolded in national Israelite sonship, is in redemptive-historical continuity with the created sonship of man.²⁹⁵

We have previously established that, in Rom. 9:4, Paul locates this adoption of Israel at the occasion of their being given the law.²⁹⁶ The law then provides the relational grounds of Israel's reintroduction of sonship to God, by theocratic entrance.²⁹⁷ This, in essence becomes a new provision of probationary sonship that was protological in Adam's constitutive sonship. Thus, 'when Paul puts *υιοθεσία* in parallel with *νομοθεσία* in Rom 9:4, he does so because he understands the continuous redemptive-historical connection between sonship and worshipful, filial obedience.'²⁹⁸ Understood as such, Israel's covenantal adoption then is not, in nature, soteriological, but only reformatinal.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ Burke, 'Spirit,' 323. Garner, *Sons*, xxv.

²⁹⁵ Garner, 'Adoption,' 216-7.

²⁹⁶ Schreiner, *Romans*, 483. Trumper, 'Exposition (I),' 68.

²⁹⁷ Murray, *Epistle*, 4. Tse, *Assurance*, 22.

²⁹⁸ Garner, 'Adoption,' 91.

²⁹⁹ Murray, *Writings*, 225.

As history unfolded Israel is then shown to fail in its reconstituted filial expectations, as Garner comments, 'Israel's corporate sonship failure is a macrocosm of the covenantal failure of *all* the sons of Adam - whether Jew or Gentiles. Hence, as Paul sees it, Israel's covenantal rebellion affirms the *cosmic* necessity of the work of the messianic Son to bring filial glory.'³⁰⁰ As such, Paul understands that inclusion into the promise made to Israel was not to be achieved by ethnic heritage,³⁰¹ but by spiritual heritage,

Jewish birth does not guarantee inclusion into the covenant line of blessing. In Rom. 9-11, Paul argues that God has continued his faithfulness to Israel by calling out the remnant of children from the Jewish nation (11:5).³⁰²

This remnant would, thus, become those who place their faith in the obedient work of the messianic son who truly meets the covenantal obligations of filial piety, and would materialise the promised adoption to sonship for true Israel.³⁰³ Thus, as Smail concludes, 'Christ becomes the one true representative of Israel who keeps the covenant when all others have broken it.'³⁰⁴

Further reflecting on the covenantal theme of Rom. 9:4, Wanamaker suggests that one of Paul's primary aims on this occasion of writing was to unite his Jewish and Gentile Christian audiences in their now common faith.³⁰⁵ He argues, Paul 'taught that one of the effects of the redemptive work of Christ was to make possible the adoptive divine sonship of all who believe in Christ, regardless of their physical connection with the Jewish people, who were the sons of God according to the Old Testament.'³⁰⁶ Extrapolating further from Gal. 3:29, Hodge notes,

The good news is that gentiles-in-Christ are now linked to Israel. ... By presenting baptism as new kinship (via adoption), Paul crafts a myth of collective identity for gentiles; they can trace their beginnings not only to their baptism into Christ but also to their ancestor, Abraham, in whose seed they were blessed.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁰ Garner, *Sons*, 259.

³⁰¹ Watson, *Paul*, 187. Garner, 'Adoption,' 161.

³⁰² Watson, *Paul*, 176-7. Wanamaker agrees. Wanamaker, 'Son,' 364.

³⁰³ Kim, *Origin*, 316.

³⁰⁴ Smail, *Once*, 101. Others agree. Peterson, 'Theology,' 123. Burke, *Family*, 114.

³⁰⁵ Wanamaker, 'Son,' 356.

³⁰⁶ Wanamaker, 'Son,' 244.

³⁰⁷ Hodge, *Sons*, 67. Others agree: Moessner, 'Family,' 52. Cosgrove, *Cross*, 52. Burke, 'Characteristics,' 70.

This blessing of adoption is now made complete by the affirmed heirship of all true and adopted Israel (as discussed of Gal. 4:4-7). As Lloyd-Jones concludes, "The Gentiles had nothing to look forward to, they had no hope. It was to the Jews only that the promise had been made; all others were outside the "covenants of promise", and had no hope,'³⁰⁸ but, "The promises are really all made to Christ Jesus the Lord; He is "the heir of all things". ... We are children of God through Him. We become the heirs of all things because of our union with Him.'³⁰⁹

In light of our previous conclusion that Christ's resurrection was not his adoption, we must consider here whether Christ's birth as an Israelite is instead what constituted his "adoption" into the redemptive-historical sonship of Israel — that is, we must ask: does the Son of God's incarnation *as an adopted Israelite* form the basis of his own soteriologically provisional sonship? If Christ is not adopted at his resurrection is he, nevertheless, an adopted son of God by virtue of his Israelite heritage as a covenantally adopted son of God?

In answer, we again recall that the nature of "Israel's adoption" here was a theocratic one — the giving of the law re-constituted Israel's sonship to the Father which was lost by Adam at his disobedience, but whilst Israel's adoption in this instance is relational, it is not soteriological. Israel was provided with the law in order to reinstate them with the commission to obey the paternal expectation, but the law itself could not bring about their obedience. Thus, the theocratic sonship of Israel, described as their own *huiiothesia*, is not ultimately soteriological, only reformatory and instructional. Israel's theocratic adoption at Sinai only anticipated the soteriological adoption that would be provided through the Messiah's obedience. The Messiah himself would not require soteriological adoption, but, by his constitutive sonship as a human being, and his inclusion into the theocratic sonship by covenantal establishment, he would, ultimately, mediate the adoption of true Israel by providing it through his representative meritorious obedience as a son. In that light, if we are to say that Jesus was in any way adopted as an Israelite it would only be in the paradigm of Israel's re-constitutive sonship by theocratic paternity.³¹⁰ This further consolidates our appreciation of why Paul never describes Christ's own sonship as one entered into by *huiiothesia*, and allows us to interpret Rom. 9:4 as Paul's reflection on the redemptive-historical adoption of Israel in light of the revelation of the Messiah's mission. His intent is to show that Israel's historic adoption is actually indicative of the Messiah as he *fulfils* the law given to Israel; not that the Messiah would be transpositional adopted,

³⁰⁸ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 407.

³⁰⁹ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 42.

³¹⁰ We refer to the distinction between a consummative adoption and transpositional adoption in the previous section.

but that through his filial success, true Israel would receive the adoption promised to them.

3.2.4. Adoption Pneumatology — The Spirit of Adoption

Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15-16 have provided insight into Paul's pneumatology of adoption, establishing that Christ's meritorious obedience is pneumatologically constituted in believers by his adoptive indwelling, and bringing awareness of that adoption in the heart of the faithful.³¹¹ What is the Spirit's function, then, in particularising adoption, assuring sonship, and sustaining Christ-like obedience in the adopted sons of God?

3.2.4.1. *Particularising Adoption*

Within his schema of adoption, Houston argues that the believer's adoption is achieved through regeneration, and the Spirit, as the '*the author of their regeneration*,'³¹² completes the work of the Father's prerogative will to adopt, and the Son's exemplary obedience achieving it. As we saw earlier, Paul's understanding of the Spirit's work in redemptive adoption is to invest believers with the Spirit of sonship, that is, the Spirit of Christ's prototypical and actualised obedient sonship. In so doing, he provides the spiritual basis of the believer's subjective adoption into the family of God, by the objective action of the Father through the Son. Webb submits,

Christ's work terminates upon God, making Him, as one of its results, a Father; the Spirit's work terminates upon man, making him, as one of its effects, a son of God. ... Christ constitutes God a Father; the Spirit constitutes the sinner a son. If man alone had needed changing, then the Spirit would have been sufficient; but Christ must first paternalize God before the Spirit can fraternalize man.³¹³

That is, the Spirit's role, in adoption, is to particularise the paternally-oriented obedience of Christ into each believer by his own indwelling,³¹⁴ and, by doing so, enables the Father to reestablish his paternal relationality of acceptance and affirmation towards his adopted children. We further recall, from Rom. 8:15-16, that the reception of the Spirit is not meant as a *condition* of sonship, but, as Scott argues, 'as an indication that the Spirit is *inseparable* from sonship. ... [so] that it can now be called *πνεῦμα υιοθεσίας* which the sons have

³¹¹ Lewis, *Spirit*, 186.

³¹² Houston, *Adoption*, 72. Emphasis original.

³¹³ Webb, *Doctrine*, 177-8.

³¹⁴ As Smail notes, 'He always acts on the basis of what Christ has already done; his work is always imitative rather than innovative.' Smail, *Father*, 147.

already received.³¹⁵ This pneumatologically consummated sonship of believers is then what also grounds their future hope of resurrection — 'In the future aspect of *υιοθεσία* (v. 23), believers, who thus have the indwelling Spirit as the means of resurrection (v. 11), participate in Jesus' resurrection to messianic Son of God in power with the Son.'³¹⁶

This pneumatological adoption not only soteriologically transforms our relationship to the Father, but also transforms believers' relationship to one another, fraternising them through their adoptive fraternity to Christ.³¹⁷ One peculiarly important aspect of this understanding is that it counteracts an individualist approach to soteriology. Gunton notes that traditional understandings of Christ metaphorically as sacrifice tend to 'create an individualistic apprehension of the work of the Spirit: the work of Christ is mediated to the believer, rather than to believers.'³¹⁸ But whilst other soteriological metaphors, such as justification, only explicitly rationalise the reconciliation of believers to God, and implicitly of their relationship to other believers, a doctrine of pneumatological adoption explicitly redefines the relationship of believers to each other as familiarly transformative into one of brotherhood. Heim observes, Paul's *huiiothesia* metaphor 'does not merely allow Paul's audience to see, but as a performative utterance *actually creates the perception of other community members as brothers and sisters of the same family*.'³¹⁹ Soteriological adoption is not individualistic investment of sonship, but believers are corporately included into the family of God by pneumatological union with Christ's obedient person. Thus, human fraternity is no longer fundamentally grounded upon their source of creative paternity, but upon the commonality of their renewed spiritual relationship to the same Father. Summarily, pneumatological adoption not only reconstitutes the filial relationship to the Father, but reconstitutes the fraternal one to Christ, and to each other. As such, the Spirit's indwelling of himself in the believer is what finally reconstitutes the believer's relationship to the Spirit, as *their* spirit of adoptive sonship (Rom. 8:15-16).

3.2.4.2. *Assuring Sonship*

Whilst the Spirit objectively secures the sonship of believers through adopting them to the Father by his indwelling of the filial spirit, he also enables the believer to be confident of the reality of their new filial position.³²⁰

³¹⁵ Scott, *Sons*, 260-1.

³¹⁶ Scott, *Sons*, 266.

³¹⁷ Billings, 'Redemption,' 499.

³¹⁸ Gunton, *Father*, 196.

³¹⁹ Heim, 'Light,' 219. Emphasis mine.

³²⁰ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 235.

Scholars have attempted various ways to abstractly describe this experience, exploring both the tangibility, yet mysterious nature of this assurance. Burke notes, on one hand, that 'this is no mystical experience, as though the Spirit subjectively whispers to us "You are God's son."' ³²¹ Peterson elaborates when he states,

We see the effects of the Spirit's work when a slave to sin cries out, "Abba, Father," the first cry of saving faith. But we cannot trace how the Spirit has worked to bring that human being to that place. ... as with all the works of the Spirit of God, it is beyond our ability to comprehend. ³²²

Girardeau, on the other hand, describes the experience more tangibly when he states, 'Strictly speaking, our own spirit, through consciousness, bears witness to our possession of the marks of sonship; that we are adopted is an inference.' ³²³ That is, the Spirit helps us become evidentially convinced of our filial character as scripture describes it, and this confirms our adoption. Girardeau also contends, 'The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, directly testifies to the fact of our adoption. He does not [only] infer that fact.' ³²⁴ Whilst the Spirit's testimony is not mystical in Burke's and Peterson's opinion, it is nonetheless tangible in Girardeau's.

In response to these two extremes, Ferguson suggests,

One mistake is thinking of this testimony of the Spirit in exclusively mystical terms, as though the Spirit whispered to us in some ineffable experience ... That would amount to a new revelation from God *over and above* the revelation given to us in Scripture. The other mistake is to reduce the supernatural element ... It may well be that this spirit-given assurance will be experienced in wonderful, even dramatic, ways. ³²⁵

Assurance of adoption, then, must be pneumatologically particularised through the personal experience of filial phenomenon *of* each believer, as the Spirit best particularises it *in* each believer — that is, sonship can be mystical, and it can be concrete, but the awareness of the fact will be a distinct personal experience of each adoptee. The notes of Rom 8:16 that the witness of the Spirit to the believer's adoption is ongoing, and is distinct from the doctrinal communication of scriptural assurances of objective salvation. He comments, 'There is no mention of God's words or quotations from Scripture in the

³²¹ Burke, *Family*, 149.

³²² Peterson, 'Theology,' 126.

³²³ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 501.

³²⁴ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 501.

³²⁵ Ferguson, *Children*, 73. Emphasis original.

vicinity of v16. ... It is when believers pray and instinctively address God as their “Abba, Father,” especially in times of great distress, that their assurance of adoption heightens.’³²⁶ This manifestation of filial relationality to the Father, thus, provides the grounds of the believer’s assurance of their adoptive sonship.

Lloyd-Jones further contends that this experience of filial belonging to the Father reflects the very filial belonging that Christ himself experienced of the Father.³²⁷ Objectively, it is when we relate to the Father in prayer and consciousness as our Father that we experience the same nature of filial assurance that Christ himself experienced. In so doing, Lloyd-Jones differentiates between an abstraction of “being a son,” from the concrete experience of the “Spirit of adoption” through the test of one’s ability to engage with God in the same manner that Christ experienced. Lloyd-Jones’ aim, then, is to provide an argument for how believers can acquire an assurance of their salvation by appealing to the distinct filial experience of the believer in their new relationship to their personal, heavenly Father. Thus, it is also the *emotional* aspect of filiation that becomes essential to a doctrine of pneumatologically objectively achieved and subjectively assured adoption. Adoptive assurance ‘involves our feelings with regard to God who is blessing us. ... You not only accept them and delight in them with your mind, you are also aware of a heart-warming effect.’³²⁸

3.2.4.3. *Disciplining Obedience*

The Holy Spirit is not himself the agent of obedient sonship, but only enabled Christ to succeed in his pursuit of filial submission to the Father. He is, thus, not only the Spirit of adoption, but he also acts as the Spirit who perfected obedience in Christ, and now in the adopted sons. Garner makes the point most succinctly when he states,

the consummate purpose of the eschatological Spirit in applying the completed work of the eschatological Son is the thorough renovation of the redeemed *sons* of Adam; true freedom *from* slavery is full freedom *for* filial obedience in Christ.³²⁹

As such, the adopted sons are now empowered by the Spirit of adoption to submit to the will of the Father as he calls them to respond to his ongoing redemptive purposes, even

³²⁶ Tse, *Assurance*, 80.

³²⁷ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 237.

³²⁸ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 238. Gundersen agrees with the credibility of personal, subjective qualification for adoptive assurance. Gundersen, ‘Adoption,’ 18.

³²⁹ Garner, ‘Adoption,’ 209. Emphasis original.

unto suffering, in conformation to Christ's own sufferings as the archetypal obedient son (Rom. 8:22-23).³³⁰ Garner notes,

the renewing, resurrecting Spirit of adoption leads the sons unto holiness in the new age of spiritual freedom, of realized adoptive sonship. In this age, he draws the adopted sons to participate in the refining sufferings of the Son *par excellence* in a shared pathway of obedience.³³¹

As such, the work of the Holy Spirit in consummating adoption results in the desire of the adopted sons to pursue holiness rather than sinful disobedience,³³² and it is by the same empowering Spirit that helped Christ succeed in his filial mission that believers can now also succeed in their pursuit of obedient sonship to the Father. This also completes adoption's Trinitarian picture as the Spirit of adoption directs and disciplines the filial disposition of the believer to love the Father, through their corresponding obedience of the Son.

3.3. The Eschatology of Adoption — Glorified Sons and Heirs of God

Having been adopted by the Father, through the obedience of Christ, by the indwelling of the Spirit of adoption, believers are presently brought into the family of God, and enjoy the status of renewed sonship and assured of their future salvation. How, then, will soteriological adoption be worked out at the eschaton? What does Paul's understand of *huiiothesia* tell us about how adoption will finally be consummated?

As previously explored, the scholarly consensus is that believers' adoption will ultimately result in their bodily glorification, conforming them to the resurrection of the Son of God as a result of his own obedience (Rom. 8:22-23).³³³ Garner develops the doctrine when he asks, '*in what sense is adoption related to bodily redemption?* Is one the subset of the other? Does one operate causally on the other? Are they separate realities which occur simultaneously?'³³⁴ In answer, Garner finds that Paul's juxtaposition of terms in Rom. 8:22-23 gives away his intent —

³³⁰ As noted earlier. Kruse, Letter, 350.

³³¹ Garner, *Sons*, 271-2. c.f. Houston, *Adoption*, 76.

³³² Ferguson, *Children*, 76.

³³³ Trumper, 'Import (II)', 106. Packer, *God*, 245. Grudem, *Theology*, 738. Theron, 'Adoption,' 14. Kim, *Origin*, 318. Hulse, 'Doctrine,' 9. Braeutigam, 'Adopted,' 169.

³³⁴ Garner, 'Adoption,' 51. Emphasis original.

Syntactically, *τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν* resides in precise apposition to *υἰοθεσίαν*. This exegetical relationship of the terms suggests that Paul is fusing these two future realities, and describing them—at least in some sense—as one.³³⁵

Thus, the resurrection body *is* the final realisation of adoption. Burke supports this view and emphasises the soteriological finality of bodily glorification in Paul's eschatology of adoption when he states, 'The body of the believer is in need not only of deliverance but also of transformation, and only when that has happened will salvation — understood here primarily as adoption — be complete.'³³⁶ Adoption, then, has both a 'retrospective and prospective dimension,'³³⁷ and fulfils a soteriological criteria of possessing a now-but-not-yet component.

However, the eschatological consequences of soteriological adoption are not limited to the re-constitution of believers physical bodies, but will also result in their receiving the inheritance that was available to Adam in his probation — had he proven himself a worthy son — but subsequently conferred to Christ in his successful achievement of obedient sonship. By their spiritual, familial, and personal union with Christ, believers, through their own hope of glorification, may hope to share in Christ's inheritance,³³⁸ and trust in their status as co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).³³⁹

What is the content and nature of this inheritance? Two connected ideas come to light. In fulfilment of the covenantal promises made to Abraham and Israel, the revealed sons of God will one day inherit a new creation for their inhabitation, and, further, they will inherit God himself by his living among them in the new creation — the new familial dwelling of God's household.³⁴⁰ Schreiner puts it best when he states,

Paul asserts that believers have inherited the promise of Abraham (Gal. 3:14, 29), and this promise is an astounding one, for Abraham is *heir of the world* (Rom. 4:13) ... Here he says something even more stunning: believers are "heirs of God" himself. The

³³⁵ Garner, 'Adoption,' 52.

³³⁶ Burke, 'Sons,' 286. Elsewhere, Burke shows how Paul's theology defines the ontology of the eternal, adopted form as bodily, not merely spiritual or dis-embodied. Burke, *Message*, 159. Peterson agrees. Peterson, *Adopted*, 167.

³³⁷ Ferguson, 'Doctrine,' 87.

³³⁸ Trumper, 'Study,' 205.

³³⁹ Beeke, *Heirs*, loc. 1078.

³⁴⁰ Trumper, 'Study,' 203. Contra Tse who does not view the inheritance as a material possession. Tse, *Assurance*, 73.

wording suggests not merely that believers are heirs of what God has promised but *of God himself*.³⁴¹

The believer's present status of co-heirs will one day be made perfect when they finally inherit what we may specifically understand, through a schema of adoption, as the realised experience of perfected familial context — children who will live in possession of an inherited and perfected creation as their family dwelling, with their true Father in loving proximity, Christ as their glorious and eternal Elder Brother, and the Spirit of sonship forever in their hearts. Authentically human, familial relationality will one day be the realised experience of believers as they live in familial intimacy with their Father God and each other.

³⁴¹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 427. Emphasis mine. Peterson agrees. Peterson, *Adopted*, 161-162.

4. Adoption — Its Soteriological Qualification and the *Ordo Salutis*

4.1. Qualifying Adoption as An Organising Framework of Salvation

Having established adoption's historical neglect, and conducted a systematic exploration of adoption's contributions in a soteriological framework, we now finally assess whether adoption qualifies as a soteriological concept. What marks adoption as an organising framework of salvation?

Burke provides a starting point when he argues that adoption serves as an organising metaphor for salvation since it fulfils three biblical criteria: Firstly, that it centres on the person and work of Christ. Secondly, that it shares a moral aspect present in other Pauline expression of soteriology. And, thirdly, that it is eschatological, possessing an already/but-not-yet nature.³⁴² From our exploration of the *huiiothesia* passages and a systematic theology of adoption it is clear that adoption fulfils these three criteria — Firstly, believers can receive adoption to sonship because of the meritorious obedience of Christ who redeems those under the law from enslavement to sonship (Gal. 4:4-5). Secondly, the adopted sons were destined for holiness and blamelessness, as anticipated by the giving of the law to Israel, God's son (Eph. 1:3-5, Rom. 9:4). And, thirdly, already adopted believers still await the final consummation of their adoption through the redemption of their bodies, and the inheritance of a perfected familial context of renewed creation as their familial dwelling in the presence of their Father (Rom. 8:15-16, 22-23). Here we see adoption's "positive" aspects as a soteriological construct. Our discovery of adoption as an organising concept by which we may explain how believers' experience from creation to fall, fall to salvation, and from salvation to future glory has been clearly demonstrated, and qualifies adoption's soteriological function as a Pauline metaphor of salvation.

Further to Burke's criteria, Mark Heim suggests a hamartiological approach to identifying a soteriological concept when he states, 'salvation is often defined by inversion, as the state achieved when the evils and estrangements of human life are overcome. Salvation is viewed fundamentally as an *absence*—the absence of sin.'³⁴³ The presence of sin, in Heim's thinking, manifests itself in a disordering of one's totality of relationships, with God, other humans, and creation. In regards to each of these relational directions Heim observes,

³⁴² Burke, *Family*, 41. c.f. Ferguson, 'Doctrine,' 86. Burke adapts from Ferguson's list, from which he combines Ferguson's historic and covenantal aspects into one single, moral criteria.

³⁴³ Heim, 'Salvation,' 322. Emphasis original.

theology has named the disorders in these three relations sin, evil, and death. Sin is the estrangement between God and humans instigated by human defiance or abnegation. Evil is the disorder within humans individually and among them collectively. Death and despair are the disorders that enter the human relation to creation when that relation is constricted to a self-enclosed reality.³⁴⁴

From here, Heim asserts that by the mechanism of justification the relationship to God is made right; by sanctification the relationship internally and to other humans is made right; and through eternal life the relationship to creation is made right.³⁴⁵ Heim's soteriological matrix then provides a criterion by which we may then qualify adoption as a soteriological concept — If salvation requires the righting of relationships between sinners and God, others, and creation, we may then assess how adoption is able to satisfy this matrix. Within the schema of adoption, and utilising the language of the family, "sin" may be thematically, or metaphorically, contextualised as rebellion or disobedience towards the Father, "evil" as the dishonour and rejection one projects towards other family members, and "death" may be seen as the ultimate form of exile or banishment from the household of the Father's dwelling. Such an articulation demonstrates adoption's thematic scope to describe the effects of sin, and further qualifies adoption's potential as an organising framework of soteriology by its ability to describe the "negative" aspects of soteriology.

By taking both of these approaches together, we can then see how adoption 'shares with other salvation metaphors both positive and negative elements'³⁴⁶ and provides a holistic perspective of salvation that is essential to soteriological functionality. As Trumper asserts,

If the atonement then is to be regarded as finished work it can only be so when both aspects of Christ's accomplishment are kept in view: a "redemption from" or an "adoption to." ... We can deduce then that adoption ought to be considered as a primary metaphor.³⁴⁷

Adoption's ability to describe the transposition of believers from a status of familial rejection to acceptance with God through a thoroughly relational context then not only qualifies adoption as an organising framework of salvation, but gives it a distinct soteriological edge through its teleological emphasis of the work of Christ, that is, to bring believers into the state of everlasting, covenantally procured sonship to the Father.³⁴⁸ As Cambell reflects,

³⁴⁴ Heim, 'Salvation,' 329.

³⁴⁵ Heim, 'Salvation,' 329.

³⁴⁶ Burke, 'Sons,' 271.

³⁴⁷ Trumper, 'Import (II),' 112.

³⁴⁸ Theron, 'Adoption,' 14. Ryrie, *Theology*, 352.

In studying the manner of Christ's witnessing for the Father, we have the conviction continually impressed upon us, that this *revealing* of the Father by the presentation to us of the life of sonship has as its object our *participation in that life of sonship*, and so our participation in that knowledge and enjoyment of the Father, and that *inheriting of the Father as the Father*, which fellowship in the life of sonship can alone bring.³⁴⁹

Thus, adoption provides a robust and rational explanation of how believers may begin their participation towards that Christological teleology of divine sonship, and grounds its soteriological foundation on the now revealed work of the perfectly obedient Son, Jesus Christ. If *sonship to the Father* is the final objective of the gospel's grand scheme of redemption, then *adoption* very suitably points believers' hearts confidently towards that goal.

4.2. Adoption in the Ordo Salutis

Whilst we have endeavoured throughout our survey of a doctrine of adoption as a soteriological metaphor to confine our scope of engagement and argument, within the theme of familial relationships, we remain conscious that adoption and sonship are simply one of many ways that Paul and others have attempted to describe the experience of believers' salvation.³⁵⁰ In our earlier historical exploration Reformed dogma, as expressed by Calvin and the Puritans, begged the question of how adoption relates to the other salvific motifs in the experience of salvation. Our final consideration in exploring a doctrine of adoption, then, is to assess its place in a wider scheme of soteriology as presented by a reformed *ordo salutis*.

A traditional *ordo salutis* identifies adoption as a particular aspect of salvation. Hulse notes, 'Effectual calling, union with Christ, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification all relate to each other.'³⁵¹ However, what is less agreed upon is how adoption relates to the other aspects. Is the order chronological, sequential, or simply logical? Does adoption, outside of its own integrity as a holistic framework of salvation utilising a familial context, rely on or is itself prerequisite of the other soteriological concepts identified?

³⁴⁹ Campbell, *Nature*, 133.

³⁵⁰ Ferguson, 'Doctrine,' 86.

³⁵¹ Hulse, 'Doctrine,' 6.

Considering, first, the two concepts regarding believers' sonship, Gill places adoption before regeneration, making adoption the formal cause of regeneration.³⁵² Developing this, Candlish and Girardeau argue that regeneration morally prerequisites adoption's relational effect, completing regeneration's internal transformation through adoption's external, relational transposition.³⁵³ Girardeau holds a similar construction, but conflates Johannine regeneration with Pauline adoption as a singular soteriological effect.³⁵⁴ Relating these sonship terms with the other concepts, however, Candlish believes that the whole *ordo salutis* does not formulate a causative sequence of salvation, but all of the effects are experienced simultaneously.³⁵⁵ Whaling goes one step further, and intersects regeneration and adoption with justification.³⁵⁶ Against a regenerative priority, Theron, alone, places adoption before all of 'redemption, justification, forgiveness, reconciliation, sanctification, salvation, and fellowship.'³⁵⁷ Adoption, then, remains soteriologically undervalued, and often conflated with other concepts of salvation.

Accounting for this general relegation of adoption as only consequential of other metaphors of salvation, Trumper notes that scholars have preferred to extrapolate their formulations '*theologically* rather than *exegetically* or *historically*. For this reason their treatments tend to focus on the soteric and pneumatological implications of Gal. 4:4-5 and Rom. 8:12 ff. at the expense of the other "huiiothesian" texts.'³⁵⁸ Trumper, thus, observes the effects of a lack of thematic integrity in developing adoption in its own framework, diluting its intrinsic potential as a soteriological metaphor.

Thinking extrinsically of adoption, Garner further observes the effect of a forensic emphasis on soteriological reflection. He argues,

Forensic fixation and its "legalized" *ordo salutis* rob the church of a fuller grasp of the comprehensive riches of union with Christ, including the filial, transformative grace proffered by the Son of God and his Spirit. A forensically acclimatized *ordo salutis* thus

³⁵² Gill, *Complete*, 257.

³⁵³ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 234. Girardeau, *Discussions*, 467.

³⁵⁴ Girardeau, *Discussions*, 467, 475-8.

³⁵⁵ Candlish, *Fatherhood*, 250. Others also hold that all of the effects of the *ordo salutis* are experienced simultaneously, without a logical order. Purkiser, *Faith*, 297. Mueller, 'Adoption,' 23. Wiley, *Theology*, 403.

³⁵⁶ Whaling, 'Adoption,' 225. Similarly, others. Stott, *Cross*, 193. Stibbe, *Orphans*, 60. c.f. Webb, *Doctrine*, 21.

³⁵⁷ Theron, 'Adoption,' 10.

³⁵⁸ Trumper, 'Exposition (I),' 62.

steers in the wrong direction, reducing key features of gospel grace to secondary or tertiary status.³⁵⁹

Critically, a forensic approach inherently results in a linear explanation, whereby the *ordo salutis* becomes a formulaic construction of causal prepositions, that does not allow for concurrent or any one-to-many relationship to exist between the various concepts, creating an environment where conflation of concepts, such as adoption and regeneration, becomes an easy, almost natural, mistake to make.³⁶⁰ Again, then, we are reminded of the need to maintain both intrinsic and extrinsic integrity in the development of adoption as a schema of salvation in its own thematic context.³⁶¹

In response to this historical relegation of adoption's significance in the *ordo salutis*, Garner suggests an approach that holistically 'pairs the forensic and renovative in the concept of adoption, by placing adoption in a mode that embraces the twofold grace of justification and sanctification.'³⁶² By reapplying adoption in the *ordo salutis* as such, Garner intends to re-position and promote adoption as an *overarching* concept of salvation, investing it with a complexity of function as 'a complex matrix to characterize the full manifestation of union, in which the sons of God are *declared* righteous and *made* righteous.'³⁶³ In designing his adoption centric schema in this manner, Garner locates adoption as a vehicle of '*duplex gratia*'³⁶⁴ — of both justification and sanctification. He posits his representation diagrammatically as such:

³⁵⁹ Garner, *Sons*, 230. Burke agrees. Burke, *Family*, 24.

³⁶⁰ Garner, 'Adoption,' 16.

³⁶¹ Garner, 'Adoption,' 17.

³⁶² Garner, *Sons*, 297.

³⁶³ Garner, *Sons*, 297.

³⁶⁴ Garner, *Sons*, 308.

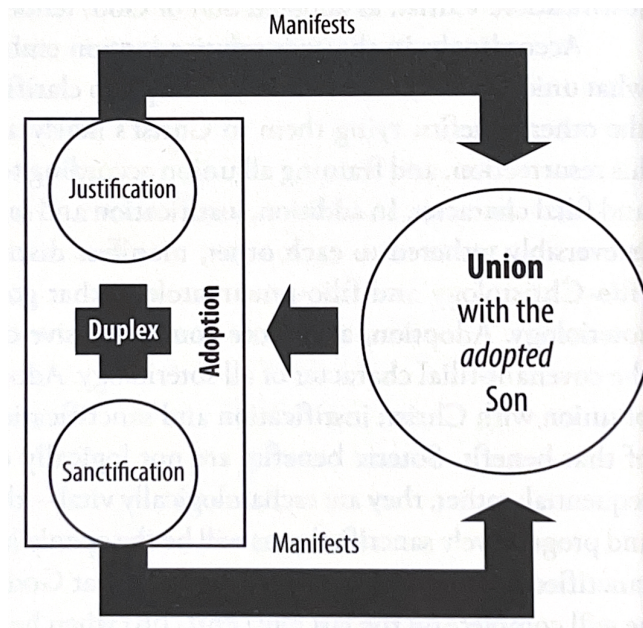


Fig. 4.2.1 — Garner's 'Union with Christ Sourced *Ordo Salutis* with Adoption as the Inclusive Benefit.'³⁶⁵

Garner, thus, develops an *ordo salutis* where adoption is the *principal* result of union with Christ, from which filially-grounded justification and sanctification, then, reciprocally *manifest* this union with Christ.³⁶⁶

Whilst we wholeheartedly support Garner's endeavour to grant adoption a higher position as an overarching framework to understand the *ordo salutis*, we believe his attempt overreaches adoption's scope as a Pauline metaphor. Whilst, historically, justification has indeed taken pride of place as the principal metaphor, around which the other benefits of salvation have been understood and perceived from, we would be careful to not make the same error of over-emphasis for adoption's sake, and risk characterising the salvific experience as one that would be, conceptually, too familial. Garner's adoptive overextension becomes apparent when he states,

Adoption clarifies and qualifies all the other benefits, tying them to Christ's newly attained sonship at his resurrection, and framing all union according to its eschatological and filial character. In addition, justification and sanctification, while irreversibly tethered to each other, manifest distinct aspects of the filio-Christology and filio-pneumatology that govern Pauline filio-soteriology. Adoption, as a more comprehensive concept, manifests the covenant-filial character of all soteriology.

³⁶⁵ Garner, *Sons*, 308.

³⁶⁶ Garner, *Sons*, 308.

Adoption is *the* benefit of union with Christ; justification and sanctification are core subsets of that benefit.³⁶⁷

Seemingly, then, Garner's prior determination of Christ's resurrection-adoption is what forces him into this soteriological architecture. In an attempt to harmonise his doctrinal conclusion that Christ himself must have been adopted to make adoption available to those united to himself, Garner necessarily expands the reach of the adoptive metaphor to become the lynchpin of his system of holistic soteriological application, rather than restricting adoption's effects to the socio-relational aspects of soteriological mechanics. To Garner's credit, we indeed agree with him when he holds *sonship*, not *adoption*, as the teleological end of redemption-history.³⁶⁸ However, this is where adoption provides only one aspect of how believers enter into, and encounter, Christocentric characterisation of their filial status. Clearly, concepts such as regeneration and even justification provide supplementary yet distinct perspectives on the total character of redeemed sonship, and, therefore, to position adoption as conceptually encompassing these other concepts breaches adoption's extrinsic integrity.

Our own response, however, is also provided by Garner, who presents an alternative, diagrammatic *ordo salutis* that is developed out of a Puritan rationalisation of soteriology.³⁶⁹ By perceiving that the Westminster Confession of Faith places justification, adoption, and sanctification equally as results of union with Christ, Garner models their union-centric *ordo salutis* as such:

³⁶⁷ Garner, *Sons*, 307. Emphasis original.

³⁶⁸ Garner, *Sons*, 309.

³⁶⁹ See section 1.1.2.2.

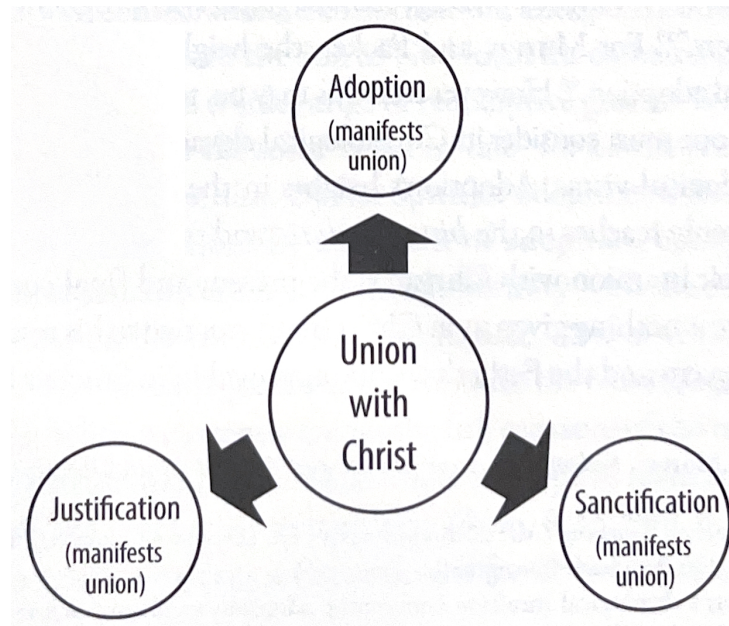


Fig. 4.2.2 — Garner’s ‘Union with Christ Sourced *Ordo Salutis* with Adoption as a Distinct Benefit.’³⁷⁰

Although the Puritans placed adoption as a logical effect of justification and sanctification, Garner’s interpretation helpfully situates adoption alongside justification and sanctification as equally effectual of union — ‘each of the benefits manifests union with Christ distinctly though indivisibly from the other benefits.’³⁷¹ Although Garner ultimately dispenses with this construction, we agree with it given its emphasis on union with Christ as the truly encompassing concept of soteriological efficacy. In our view, such a construction provides a more balanced and reasonable presentation of an *ordo salutis*, since it neither relegates adoption as a secondary function of salvation, yet also maintains its position as a distinct yet limited concept of soteriology. By positioning adoption as a distinct yet equal, and concurrent consequence of a prerequisite union with Christ, we avoid the forensic anxiety to formulate a linear logic of soteriological experience, and also allow adoption to inform soteriology with its distinct yet limited contribution as a familial metaphor of salvation, leaving room for justification, sanctification, and other metaphors to explain aspects and contexts of the gospel’s holistic effects in their own peculiarities.³⁷²

In summary, adoption’s historical neglect as a conceptually organising framework of salvation has led to its relegation as a secondary or supplementary concept within

³⁷⁰ Garner, *Sons*, 303.

³⁷¹ Garner, *Sons*, 303.

³⁷² Hypothetically, union to Christ’s *sonship* may yet be the overarching soteriological concept that all of these benefits may be derived from — justification transforming filial morality, sanctification transforming filial spirituality, regeneration transforming filial causality, and adoption transforming filial relationality — but this theory will require further investigation.

reformed soteriology. By being cognisant of the unhelpful anxiety to construct a strictly linear *ordo salutis*, we may posit that adoption, alongside justification and sanctification, are each grounded upon the overarching mechanism of pneumatological union with Christ, and, together, become the subjective effects of this foundational, soteriological union. Having explored adoption's rich explanatory potential as a metaphor of salvation, in a thematically familial context, we see that the doctrine of adoption indeed provides a primary way to understand the soteriological effects of union with Christ, corresponding in value with other primary metaphors and concepts such as justification and sanctification.

Conclusions

Despite its historical neglect the Christian concept of adoption has much to offer as an explanatory metaphor of believers' salvation. In investigating this claim the aim of this paper has been to test the thesis that adoption presents a valid, distinct, and enriching articulation of how believers are saved through the metaphorical context and language of the family, through a critical survey of existing knowledge on the subject.

In so doing, we first established a set of foundational questions arising from historical insight into the concept. We discovered doctrinal insufficiencies, both characterising adoption's underdevelopment, but also identifying its potential to explain salvation through the context of the familial dynamic between God and humanity in both the pre and postlapsarian phases; the role of each of the Trinitarian persons in outworking adoptive sonship of believers; and the distinct contribution that adoption provides in a Reformed understanding of the *ordo salutis*. These questions provided the investigative context through which we then conducted an exploration of the biblical motif of *huiiothesia*, concluding that Paul had a synthetic, Jewish-Roman understanding of his adoption concept, from which he presents what can be extrapolated as a historical-redemptive theology of adoption, from protology to eschatology, across the five occasions where he employs the term. This biblical study then provided us with the relevant theological data required to conduct a systematic exploration of adoption in response to the soteriological deficiencies arising from the historical neglect. From there we then proceeded to construct a thematically integrative soteriology of adoption by exploring its particular contributions and limitations within the key areas of cosmology, soteriology, and eschatology. Our key findings from this systematic study concluded that: humanity possessed a constitutive sonship to their creator God, but also that the notion of sonship is fundamentally characterised by a quality of filial obedience, rather than determined by the mode of filial entrance. Heirship and inheritance form the basis of approved sonship and confirm filial authenticity. That the Trinitarian persons cooperate to initiate, actualise, and particularise salvific adoption for believers — most notably through Christ, who, by his mediatorial and covenantal obedience, provides the grounds of believe's worthy adoption through their faithful union with him. And that Christ's resurrection was not his resurrection-adoption, but his sonship-declaration unto the status of prototypical heir, by which the adopted sons of God may now also hope for their future glorification and worthy inheritance. Having explored adoption's particular contribution to a theology of salvation, we, therefore, qualified its soteriological nature and value, by identifying its ability to both positively explain believers' transformation in its Christocentric, morally grounded, and now-but-not-yet markers of soteriological criteria, as disobedient sons of God who are transformatively brought into a status of perfected sonship by the work of the obedient

Son; as well as negatively explaining the human condition of sin, evil, and death through the corresponding relational concepts of rebellion, dishonour, and exile. Having qualified adoption's soteriological nature we then posited an expression of the *ordo salutis* that elevates adoption from its secondary status, and aligned it as a primary soteriological concept alongside justification and sanctification as concomitant benefits and manifestations of one's saving union with the obedient Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Throughout this exploratory study we have endeavoured to maintain adoption's intrinsic and extrinsic integrity in order to demonstrate its ability to provide a robust, explanatory vehicle of salvation without having to conflate or subsume it with or under other concepts of salvation, and believe we have evidenced adoption's distinct and valuable contribution to soteriology as an organising framework that enriches Christian understanding of one's salvation through the metaphorical, yet real, context of our familial relationship to God. As we bring this study to a close we, therefore, once more reflect on the purpose of the gospel: if sonship to the Father is the final objective of the gospel's grand scheme of salvation, then *adoption*, to the Father, achieved by the obedient Sonship of Christ, and made real in believers by the Spirit of Adoption, is a relationally rich and experientially powerful doctrine of salvation.

(29,991 words)

Bibliography

- Aasgaard, Reidar, 'Paul as a Child: Children and Childhood in the Letters of the Apostle,' *JBL*, 126.1 (2007), 129-59.
- Allen, David L., *The Atonement: A Biblical, Theological, and Historical Study of the Cross of Christ*, Nashville: B & H, 2019.
- Anonymous, 'Candlish's Cunningham Lectures,' *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 14 (1865), 720-787.
- Aquinas, Thomas, 'Question 23. Is Christ an Adopted Son of God?,' translated by Colman E. O'Neill, in *Summa Theologiæ*, Vol. 50, London: Blackfriars, 1965, 158-169.
- , 'Question 33. The Father,' translated by T. O'Brien, in *Summa Theologiæ*, Vol. 7 London: Blackfriars, 1976, 3-23.
- Athanasius, 'Against the Arians: Discourse 3,' translated by Archibald Robertson, in Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Vol. 4, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1891, 393-432.
- Augustine, 'On The Gospel of John: Tractate 2: Chapter 1:6-14' translated by John Gibb, in Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, Vol. 7, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979, 13-18.
- , 'Sermon 89: On the Words of the Gospel, John 10:30 "I and The Father are One,"' translated by R. G. MacMullen, in Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, Vol. 6, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1888, 527-529.
- Beeke, Joel R., 'Our Glorious Adoption: Trinitarian Based and Transformed Relationships,' *Puritan Reformed Journal*, 3.2 (2011), 63-79.
- , *Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption*, Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008, e-Book (Kindle version).
- Bent, Jessica C., "'Become What You Are!' A Consideration of the Role of Adoption in Relation to Justification and Sanctification in the Theology of Herman Bavinck,' (MA Dissertation, Acadia Divinity College, 2018).
- Berger, Adolf, Barry Nicholas, and Susan M. Treggiari, 'Adoption,' in Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Fourth Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 12-13.
- Berkhof, Louis, *Systematic Theology*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958.
- Best, Ernest, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.
- Billings, J. Todd, 'Redemption Applied: Union with Christ,' in Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, 497-513.
- Bird, Michael F., 'When did Jesus get Adopted as God's Son?,' *Centre for Study of Christian Origins* website (<http://www.christianorigins.div.ed.ac.uk/2017/05/24/adoptedasgodsson/>, Accessed 22 January 2022).

- Boice, James Montgomery, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1986.
- Bourassa, François, 'Adoptive Sonship: Our Union with the Divine Persons,' *Theological Studies*, 13.3 (1952), 309-335.
- Boyce, James Pettigru, 'Abstract of Systematic Theology,' *The Reformed Reader* website (<http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/boyce/aos/chapter36.htm>, Accessed 7 January 2022)
- Braeutigam, Michael, 'Adopted By The Triune God: The Doctrine of Adoption from a Trinitarian Perspective,' *SBET*, 27.2 (2009), 164-175.
- Briggman, Anthony, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, Oxford: OUP, 2019.
- Burke, Trevor J., 'Adopted as Sons: The Missing Piece in Pauline Soteriology,' in S. E. Porter (ed.), *Paul: Jew, Greek and Roman*, Leiden: Brill, 2008, 259-287.
- , 'Adoption and the Spirit in Romans 8,' *Evangelical Quarterly*, 70 (1998), 311-324.
- , 'Pauline Adoption: A Sociological Approach,' *Evangelical Quarterly*, 73.2 (2001), 119-134.
- , 'The Characteristics of Paul's Adoptive-Sonship (HUIOTHESIA) Motif,' *IBS*, 17 (1995), 62-74.
- , 'Paul's Role as "Father" to his Corinthian "Children" in Socio-historical Context,' in Trevor J. Burke & J Keith Elliott (eds.), *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, 95-113.
- , 'Proclaiming Jesus in Global Mission,' in T. Cornman (ed.), *Proclaiming Jesus: Essays in Honour of Joseph Stowell*, Chicago: Moody, 2007, 251-269.
- , 'Romans,' in Trevor J. Burke and Keith Warrington (eds.), *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit*, London: SPCK, 2014, 129-144.
- , 'Exegesis 14: Adoptive-Sonship,' *Foundations: An International Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 29 (1992), 25-29.
- , *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*, Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.
- , *The Message of Sonship*, Nottingham: IVP, 2011.
- Buswell, James Oliver, Jr., *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion: Volume 2*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963.
- Byrne, Brendan, 'Sons of God' — 'Seed of Abraham': *A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul Against the Jewish Background*, Analecta Biblica, Vol. 83, Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979.
- Calvin, John, in John T. McNeill (ed.), *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XX and XXI, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- Campbell, John McLeod, *The Nature Of The Atonement*, Grand Rapids: Handsel Press, 1996.
- Candlish, Rob S., 'Adoption,' in James Hastings (ed.), *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1898, 40-42.

- , *The Fatherhood of God*, Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1865.
- Capes, David B. "Adoption" in the New Testament,' *A Word in Edgewise* website (<https://davidbcapes.com/2013/04/19/adoption-in-the-new-testament/>, Accessed 18 August 2022).
- Chrysostom, 'Homilies on Ephesians: Homily 1: Chapter 1:1-2,' in Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, Vol. 13., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1888, 50-55.
- Cook, J. I., 'The Concept of Adoption in the Theology of Paul,' in J. I. Cook (ed.), *Saved by Hope: Essays in Honour of Richard C. Oudersluys*, Grand Rapids: Eerdsman, 1978, 131-44.
- Coolman, Holly Taylor, 'Adoption and the Goods of Birth,' *Journal of Moral Theology*, 1.2 (2012), 96-114.
- Corniche, Salaam, 'Adoption in Christ: The Best Gift Ever,' *St Francis Magazine*, 9.2 (2013), 69-103.
- Cosgrove, Charles H., *The Cross and The Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians*, Macon: Mercer, 1988.
- Crawford, Thomas J., *The Fatherhood of God: Its General and Special Aspects and Particularly in Relation to the Atonement*, Third Edition, Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1868.
- Dabney, R. L. *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology*, Second Edition, St Louis: Presbyterian, 1878.
- Davids, P. H. 'Adoption,' in Walter A. Elwell (ed.), *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Basingstoke: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1984, 13.
- DeSilva, David A., *The Letter to the Galatians*, NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018.
- Dewalt, Michael and Maarten Kuivenhoven, 'Calvin's Practical View of Adoption: Its Privileges and Duties,' *Puritan Reformed Journal*, 6.1 (2014), 43-62.
- Dewalt, Michael, 'The Doctrine of Adoption: Theological Trajectories in Puritan Literature,' *Puritan Reformed Journal*, 7.2 (2015), 127-146.
- du Toit, Andre B., 'Forensic Metaphors in Romans and Their Soteriological Significance,' in Jan G. Van der Watt (ed.), *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, Leiden: Brill, 2005, 213-247.
- Dunn, James D. G., *The Epistle to the Galatians*, London: A & C Black, 1993.
- Dutton, Anne, *A Discourse Concerning God's Act of Adoption: To Which is Added, A Discourse Upon the Inheritance of the Adopted Sons of God*, London: E. Gardner, 1737.
- Emery, Gilles, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, translated by Francesca Aran Murphy, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Erickson, Millard J., *Christian Theology*, Second Edition, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B., 'The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship,' in Nigel M. de S. Cameron and Sinclair B. Ferguson (eds.), *Pulpit and People: Essays in Honour of William Still on his 75th Birthday*, Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1986, 81-88.

- , *Children of the Living God*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989.
- Fessler, Michael, 'Adoption and Jewish Families: A Proposal,' *The Reconstructionist*, 66.1 (2001), 52-59.
- Foulkes, Francis, *Ephesians*, Tyndale Commentaries, Nottingham: IVP, 1989, e-Book (Olive Tree version).
- Fowl, Stephen E., *Ephesians: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Friedeman, Caleb T., 'Jesus' Davidic Lineage and the Case for Jewish Adoption,' *New Testament Studies*, 66.2 (2020), 249-267.
- Gaffin Jr., Richard B., and David B. Garner, 'The Divine and Adopted Son of God: A Response to Joshua Maurer and Ty Kieser,' *Themelios*, 47.1 (2022), 144-55.
- Gaffin Jr., Richard B., *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978.
- Gardner, Jane F., *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.
- Garner, David B., 'Adoption in Christ,' (PhD Dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2002).
- , *Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ*, Phillipsburg: P & R, 2016.
- George H. Box, 'Adoption (Semitic),' in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908, 114-5.
- Gerrish, Brian A., *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993.
- Gill, John, *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, 3 Vols., London: W. Winterbotham, 1796.
- Girardeau, J. L., in George A. Blackburn (ed.), *Discussions of Theological Questions*, Harrisonburg: Sprinkle, 1986.
- Glenn, Paul J., '23. The Adoption of Sons,' *A Tour of the Summa* website (<http://www.catholictheology.info/summa-theologica/summa-part3.php?q=66>, Accessed 11 January 2022).
- Griffith, Howard, "'The First Title of the Spirit': Adoption in Calvin's Soteriology,' *EvQ*, 73.2 (2001), 135-53.
- Grudem, Wayne, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Nottingham: IVP, 1994.
- Gundersen, David A., 'Adoption, Assurance, and the Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit,' *Journal of Family Ministry*, 2.1 (2011), 18-35.
- Gunton, Colin E., *Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, London: T & T Clark, 2003.
- , *The Actuality of Atonement*, London: T & T Clark, 1988.
- Heim, Erin, 'Light through a Prism: New Avenues of Inquiry for the Pauline HUIOTHESIA Metaphors,' (DPhil Dissertation, University of Otago, 2014).

- Heim, S. Mark, 'Salvation as Communion: Partakers of the Divine Nature,' *Theology Today*, 61.3 (2004), 322-333.
- Hodge, Caroline Johnson, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Hodge, Charles, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1856.
- , *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1864.
- , *Systematic Theology: Volume 3*, New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co, 1874.
- Houston, Thomas, *The Adoption of Sons: Its Nature, Spirit, Privileges and Effects: A Practical and Experimental Treatise*, Second Edition, Brighton: Etrick Press, 2021.
- Hulse, Erroll, 'Recovering the Doctrine of Adoption,' *Reformation Today*, 105 (1988), 5-14.
- Irenaeus, *Five Books of S. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons: Against Heresies*, translated by Rev. John Keble, London: James Parker, 1872.
- , *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, Translations of Christian Literature, Series IV, London: SPCK, 1920.
- Jarrel, W. A., 'Adoption Not in the Bible Salvation,' *Review & Expositor*, 15.4 (1918), 459-469.
- Keener, Craig S., *Galatians*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Kelly, Douglas F., 'Adoption: An Underdeveloped Heritage of the Westminster Standards,' *The Reformed Theological Review*, 52.3 (1993), 110-120.
- Kim, Kyu Seop, 'Another Look at Adoption in Romans 8:15 in Light of Roman Social Practices and Legal Rules,' *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 44.3 (2014), 133-143.
- Kim, S., *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981.
- Kirk, J. R. Daniel, 'Appointed Son(s): An Exegetical Note on Romans 1:4 and 8:29,' *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 14.2 (2004), 241-242.
- Kruse, Colin G., *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, PNTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Large, Andrew, 'Adoption: A Hermeneutic to Reflect Upon the Praxis of the Church?,' *Modern Believing*, 60.4 (2019), 313-325.
- Lassen, Eva Marie, 'The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor,' in Halvor Moxnes (ed.), *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, London: Routledge, 1997, 103-120.
- Lawson, J., *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus*, London: Epworth Press, 1948.
- Leith, J. H., *Assembly at Westminster: Reformed Theology in the Making*, Atlanta: John Knox, 1973.
- Levin, Yigal, 'Jesus, "Son of God" and "Son of David": The "Adoption" of Jesus into the Davidic Line,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 28.4 (2006), 415-442.

- Lewis, Robert Brian, *Paul's "Spirit of Adoption" in its Roman Imperial Context*, Library of New Testament Studies, Vol. 545, London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Litton, E. A., *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, London: James Clarke, 1960.
- Lloyd-Jones, D. M., *Romans: The Sons of God. An Exposition of Chapter 8.5-17*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974.
- Loane, Marcus L., *The Hope of Glory: An Exposition of The Eighth Chapter in The Epistle to The Romans*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968.
- Longenecker, Richard N., 'The Metaphor of Adoption in Paul's Letters,' *The Covenant Quarterly*, 72.3 (2014), 71-78.
- Lyll, Francis, 'Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: Adoption,' *JBL*, 88 (1969), 458-66.
- , *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Macleod, Donald, *The Person of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology, Leicester: IVP, 1998.
- Marshall, L. H., *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics*, London: Macmillan, 1946.
- Maurer, Joshua and Ty Kieser, 'Jesus, "Adopted Son of God"? Romans 1:4, Orthodox Christology, and Concerns about a Contemporary Conclusion,' *Themelios*, 46.2 (2021), 319-335.
- Mawhinney, Allen, 'God as Father: Two Popular Theories Reconsidered,' *JETS*, 31.2 (1988), 181-189.
- , 'The Family of God: One Model for the Church of the 90s,' *Presbyterion*, 19.2 (1993), 77-96.
- McGrath, Alister E., *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Sixth Edition, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2017.
- , *Knowing Christ*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002.
- McKinlay, Edward, 'The Relation of Incarnation to Atonement in the Christology of R. S. Candlish and its Contribution to the Development of Scottish Theology,' (PhD Dissertation, Edinburgh University, 1966).
- McIntyre, John, *The Shape of Soteriology*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992.
- Menzies, William W., *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective*, Springfield: Gospel, 2015.
- Miley, John, *Systematic Theology*, 2 Vols., New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1892.
- Milton, Michael A., *What is the Doctrine of Adoption?*, Phillipsburg: P&R, 2012.
- Moessner, Jeanne Stevenson, 'One Family, Under God, Indivisible,' *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, 13.2 (2003), 51-65.
- Moo, Douglas J., *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Moore, Russell D., *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2009.
- Mueller, John Theodore, 'Adoption,' *Christianity Today*, 6.15 (1962), 22-23.

- Mullins, Edgar Young, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*, Philadelphia: Judson, 1917.
- Murray, John, *Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. 2, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977.
- , *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.
- , *The Epistle to the Romans*, NLCNT, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1967.
- Neff, David, 'Heirs, Apparently,' *Christianity Today*, 57.10 (2013), 32.
- Ortland, Gavin, 'Adopted by the Living God,' *The Gospel Coalition* website (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/adopted-by-the-living-god/>, Accessed 31 August 2022).
- Osbourne, Grant R., *Romans*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series, Downers Grove: IVP, 2004, e-Book (Olive Tree version).
- Oulton, J. E. L., *Alexandrian Christianity: Selected Translations of Clement and Origen with Introductions and Notes*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954.
- Owen, John, *The Works of John Owen: Vol 2: Of Communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965.
- Packer, J. I., *Knowing God*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2004.
- Patterson, Richard D., 'Parental Love as a Metaphor for Divine-Human Love,' *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 46.2 (2003), 205-216.
- Payton, James R, *Irenaeus on the Christian Faith: A Condensation of 'Against Heresies'*, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2012.
- Peppard, Michael, 'Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 73.1 (2011), 92-110.
- , *Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in its Social and Political Context*, Oxford: OUP, 2011.
- Perkins, PHEME, 'Ephesians,' in Leander E. Keck, et al. (eds.), *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: Volume X*, Nashville: Abingdon, 2015, e-Book (Olive Tree version).
- Peterson, Robert A., *Adopted by God: From Wayward Sinners to Cherished Children*, Phillipsburg: P&R, 2001.
- , 'Toward a Systematic Theology of Adoption,' *Presbyterion*, 27.2 (2001), 120-131.
- Pieper, Francis, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 2, translated by Theodore Engelder, et al, St Louis: Concordia, 1951.
- Pope, William Burt, *Compendium of Christian Theology*, London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1875.
- Post, Stephen G., 'Adoption Theologically Considered,' *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 24.1 (1997), 149-168.
- Purkiser, W. T. (ed.) at al., *Exploring Our Christian Faith*, Kansas: Beacon Hill Press, 1960.
- Ridderbos, Herman N., *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, NICNT, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1961.

- Rollock, Robert, in Aaron Clay Denlinger and Noah Phillips (trans.), 'Robert Rollock's "Treatise on Justification,"' *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, 27 (2016), 99-100.
- Rossell, W. 'New Testament Adoption: Greco-Roman, or Semitic?,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 71 (1952), 233-234.
- Ryrie, Charles, *Basic Theology*, Chicago: Moody, 1986.
- Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes*, Vol. 3, Fourth Edition, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919.
- Schoenberg, Martin W., 'Huiiothesia: The Word and The Institution,' *Scripture*, 15 (1963), 115-23.
- Schreiner, Thomas R., *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Scott, James M., *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Huiiothesia in the Pauline Corpus*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992.
- , 'Adoption, Sonship,' in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin & Daniel G. Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1993, 15-18.
- Senna, Gary M., 'The Doctrine of Adoption,' (MA Dissertation, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2006).
- Smail, Tom, *Once and for All: A Confession of the Cross*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998.
- , *The Forgotten Father: Rediscovering the Heart of the Christian Gospel*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996.
- Stetina, Karin Spiecker, *The Fatherhood of God in John Calvin's Thought*, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2016.
- Stevenson-Moessner, Jeanne, *The Spirit of Adoption: At Home in God's Family*, Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003.
- Stibbe, Mark, *From Orphans to Heirs: Celebrating our Spiritual Adoption*, Oxford: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 1999.
- Stott, John R. W., *The Cross of Christ*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1986.
- , *The Message of Romans*, BST, Nottingham: IVP, 1994.
- Theron, D. J., "'Adoption" in the Pauline Corpus,' *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 28.1 (1956), 6-14.
- Thielman, Frank, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Thiessen, Henry Clarence, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Revised by Vernon D. Doerksen, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949.
- Towner, W. Sibley, *Genesis*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Trumper, T. J. R., 'A Fresh Exposition of Adoption: I. An Outline,' *SBET*, 23.1 (2005), 60-80.
- , 'A Fresh Exposition of Adoption: II. Some Implications,' *SBET*, 23.2 (2005), 194-215.

- , 'An Historical Study of Adoption in the Calvinist Tradition,' (PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2001).
- , 'Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ,' (Book Review), *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 62.1 (2019), 204-209.
- , 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation. I: The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage,' *SBET*, 14.2 (1996), 129-145.
- , 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation. II: The Adoption Metaphor in Theological Usage,' *SBET*, 15.2 (1997), 98-115.
- , 'The Theological History of Adoption I: An Account', *SBET*, 20.1 (2002), 4-28.
- , 'The Theological History of Adoption II: A Rationale', *SBET*, 20.2 (2002), 177-202.
- Tse, Chun, *Assurance of Adoption: A New Paradigm for Assurance of Salvation*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2020.
- Wanamaker, Charles Arthur, 'The Son and the Sons of God: A Study in Elements of Paul's Christology and Soteriological Thought,' (PhD Dissertation, University of Durham, 1980).
- Watson, Edward W., *Paul, his Roman Audience, and the Adopted People of God: Understanding the Pauline Metaphor of Adoption in Romans as Authorial Audience*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2008.
- Webb, Robert Alexander, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption*, Harrisonburg: Sprinkle, 2012.
- Westermann, Claus, *Genesis 1-11*, London: SPCK, 1974.
- Westhead, Nigel, 'Adoption in the Thought of John Calvin,' *SBET*, 13.2 (1995), 102-115.
- Whaling, Thornton, 'Adoption,' *Princeton Theological Review*, 21 (1923), 223-235.
- Widdicombe, Peter, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Wiley, H. Orton, *Christian Theology*, 3 vols. Kansas: Nazarene, 1940.
- Wilkinson, Michael, 'Adoption in Calvin's Soteriology: Basis for Redemption or Benefit of Union?,' *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 62.1 (2019), 57-75.
- Witsius, Herman, *The Economy of the Covenants Between Man and God*, Edinburgh: Thomas Turnbull, 1803.
- Yarden, Ophir, 'Adoption in Judaism,' *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 51.4 (2012), 276-283.
- Yeats, John M., 'The Biblical Model of Adoption,' *Journal of Family Ministry*, 2.1 (2011), 8-17.
- Zaspel, Fred, 'Jesus' Resurrection, Our Justification,' *The Gospel Coalition* website, (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/jesus-resurrection-our-justification/>, Accessed 8 September 2022).
- Ziegler, Geordie, 'Trinitarian Adoption and Identity Formation,' in Melanie Springer Mock, Martha Kalnin Diede, and Jeremiah Webster (eds.), *The Spirit of Adoption: Writers on Religion, Adoption, Faith, and More*, Eugene: Cascade, 2014, 18-25.