Another astounding word for salvation used in the New Testament is adoption. Adoption is an act of God whereby He makes us members of His family (Grudem’s Systematic Theology page 736). When we speak of being members of God’s family, we are speaking of our status or standing now that has come as a result of our faith in Christ. This has become our right and privilege.

John 1:12-13 - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. NASB

When we speak about adoption in regard to the order of salvation, it is clear that adoption follows faith and is a direct result of faith. Although this adoption has included us in the Old Testament blessing of being called “children of Abraham” (Rom 9:7-8, Gal 4:28), it did not reach its full status until Christ came and merited this blessing for us in its fullness.

Galatians 3:23-26 - 23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. NASB

We see then that our adoption is a status and privilege that is our because of our faith in Christ. In contrast we see that those who do not believe in Christ, or live a life of love and obedience to Him do not possess this blessing but in fact are “children of wrath” and “sons of disobedience” (Eph 2:3). Jesus explained to the unbelieving Jews that they were in fact sons of the devil himself, not of God, because of their rejection of Christ.

John 8:41-45 - 41 "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. NASB

And John clarifies that a life of disobedience is a sure sign that one is not a child of God.

1 John 3:9-10 - 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. NASB

But those who are children of God have received the blessing of the Holy Spirit to have come to live inside of them. We are said to have received the “spirit of adoption,” and He “bears witness with our spirit” that we are indeed His very own children.
Romans 8:14-17 - 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. NASB

The terms “Abba! Father!” are used to describe that intimacy of relations that we now experience with God by His Spirit within us. It is a cry of dependence and adoration that each one of us has received as a result of Him taking up residence within us.

Galatians 4:6-7 - 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. NASB

Now since we have become members of His family, we are therefore together with all Christian believers in a new and heavenly relation to them as our beloved family. And we have experienced this blessing as we have met so many Christians whom we hardly know, yet that Spirit within us bears witness of the profundity of our life together in Christ, and having God as our blessed Father! Often times the relationships that we now experience with fellow Christians, even run deeper than they do with pour own blood relatives. And so we speak as fellow Christians as brothers and sisters, members of our own dear family.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 – 1 Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, 2 the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity. NASB

Moreover, having God as our Father, and we being His children, is in fact the highest privilege we could possess. Consider, what higher place of honor do you have to anyone except to be a member of the family. Consider John’s profound words;

1 John 3:1 – 1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. NASB

It is the great love of God that motivated Him to adopt us! Indeed the God who is love that has lavished His love upon us to such degree that He has made us His very own kids! And “such we are,” repeats the Apostle, as if to solidify in our understanding the certainty of this high privilege. And this privilege brings with it innumerable blessings that we experience everyday of our lives. Indeed that Lord God Almighty, having become our Father, is now disposed to meet all of our needs and to care for us with lovingkindness and compassion.

Psalm 103:13 - 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. NASB

Matthew 6:30-32 - 30 "But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? 31 "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we
drink?” or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ 32 "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. NASB

And we have the blessing and benefit of being led by God, guided by Him so that we walk in the path of blessing and privilege.

Romans 8:14 - 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. NASB

And He fills us with the good fruit of His Spirit so that we experience and enjoy the beauty and goodness of His own virtue in our persons as He fashions us into His own likeness.

Galatians 5:22 - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. NASB

And He has yet laid up for us an eternal inheritance, “kept in Heaven” for us, that we will experience the blessing of forever and ever, world without end.

1 Peter 1:3-5 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. NASB

How could words describe the abundance of this blessing that endures forever to be enjoyed without end in the coming ages. We are said to be “heirs with Christ,” who of course is the “heir of all things” (Heb 1:2).

Romans 8:16-17 - 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Galatians 4:6-7 - 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. NASB

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 - 21 So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God. NASB

Adoption is also spoken of in Scripture as a yet future event, when it is fully consummated by the glorification of our bodies when Christ returns.

Romans 8:23 - 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. NASB

Let us see in all of these wonderful blessings of adoption that God has conferred upon us the highest privilege indeed, so much so that we have even been brought into the most intimate relation with God, as a result of His free grace to us in Christ. Let this be a great motivating factor for us to live in a manner worthy of His great love, both glorifying and enjoying Him as we live out our Christian life, eagerly awaiting that day when our redemption shall reach its fullness at the resurrection, and we are glorified together with all those who love His appearing!