



What Does the Bible Say About Kids Who Need Families?

God's heart for the hurting, the oppressed, and the marginalized is exemplified in thousands of verses devoted to these groups of people throughout scripture. The following passages represent every instance in the Bible where orphans, the fatherless, or the concept of adoption is specifically mentioned.

God's Love and Protection

Deuteronomy 10:18

He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 24:17

You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge.

Psalms 10:14

You have seen it, for You have beheld mischief and vexation to take it into Your hand. The unfortunate commits himself to You; You have been the helper of the orphan.

Psalms 10:17-18

O Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear To vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, So that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror.

Psalms 68:5-6a

A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation. God sets the lonely in families.

Psalms 146:9

The Lord protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, But He thwarts the way of the wicked.

Proverbs 23:10-11

Do not move the ancient boundary Or go into the fields of the fatherless, For their Redeemer is strong; He will plead their case against you.

Hosea 14:3

Assyria will not save us, We will not ride on horses; Nor will we say again, "Our god," To the work of our hands; For in You the orphan finds mercy.

Jeremiah 49:11

Leave your orphans behind, I will keep them alive; And let your widows trust in Me.

God's Commands

Deuteronomy 14:29

The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Deuteronomy 16:11

And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name.

Deuteronomy 16:14

And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and widow who are in your towns.

Deuteronomy 24:19-21

When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow.

Deuteronomy 26:12

When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.

Deuteronomy 26:13

You shall say before the Lord your God, "I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments."

Psalm 82:3

Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute.

Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.

Jeremiah 7:5-7

For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

Job 22:9

You have sent widows away empty, And the strength of the orphans has been crushed.

James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

God's Opposition to Those Who Harm the Orphan

Exodus 22:22-24

You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

Deuteronomy 27:19

"Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

Job 24:9

Others snatch the orphan from the breast, And against the poor they take a pledge.

Psalms 94:6

They slay the widow and the stranger and murder the orphans.

Isaiah 1:23

Your rulers are rebels And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe And chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, Nor does the widow's plea come before them.

Isaiah 10:2

So as to deprive the needy of justice and rob the poor of My people of their rights, so that widows may be their spoil and that they may plunder the orphans.

Jeremiah 5:28

"They are fat, they are sleek, They also excel in deeds of wickedness; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; And they do not defend the rights of the poor."

Jeremiah 22:3

Thus says the Lord, "Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place."

Ezekiel 22:7

They have treated father and mother lightly within you. The alien they have oppressed in your midst; the fatherless and the widow they have wronged in you.

Zechariah 7:10

And do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.

Malachi 3:5

"Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the Lord of hosts.

Job 6:27

You would even cast lots for the orphans and barter over your friend.

Job 24:3

They drive away the donkeys of the orphans; they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

Doctrine of Spiritual Adoption

Romans 8:15

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!"

Romans 8:23

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.

Romans 9:4

... who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises.

Galatians 4:5

... so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Ephesians 1:5

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will ...

God Makes Us a Part of His Family

John 1:12-13

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, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Romans 9:7-8

...nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

I John 3:1-2

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see him just as he is.

Examples of Orphans

Lot	Genesis 11:27-28
The Daughters of Zelophehad	Numbers 27:1-5
Jotham	Judges 9:16-21
Mephibosheth 2	Samuel 9:3
Joash	2 Kings 11:1-12
Esther	Esther 2:7

Examples of “Adoption”

Moses “adopted” by Pharaoh’s daughter	Exodus 2:1-10
Job cared for unnamed orphans	Job 31:16-18
Mordecai “adopted” Esther	Esther 2:7
Jesus “adopted” by Joseph	Matthew 1:18-24
Every Christian has been adopted by God through Jesus Christ	Ephesians 1:5

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