

Biblical Theology

Unit 5: Doctrine of Salvation – Lesson 5: Adoption

Nature of Adoption

- Definition: Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.
 1. **Adoption is the relational aspect of salvation and redemption.**
 - **John 1:12** - Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God
 - **John 8:42-44** - Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires.
 - **Romans 8:14-17** - the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.
 2. **Adoption was not fully realized until the New Covenant.**
 - **Galatians 3:24-26** - So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,
 - **Romans 9:8** - In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.
 - **Galatians 4:4-7** - So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.
 3. **Adoption is distinct from regeneration.**
 - **John 3:3** - "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."
 - **John 1:12** - Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God
 4. **Adoption is distinct from justification.**
 - **1 John 3:1** - See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Privileges of Adoption

- In God's abundant grace, he not only saves us from sin but blesses us with the privileges of being his children.
 1. **God's children can relate to God as a father.**
 - **Matthew 6:9** - This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name
 - **1 John 3:1** - See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
 - **Hebrews 12:5-6** - And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."
 - **Matthew 6:32** - For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.
 - **Matthew 7:1** - If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

2. **God's children are led by the Holy Spirit.**

- **Luke 11:13** - *If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*"
- **Romans 8:14** - *For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.*

3. **God's children are his heirs.**

- **Galatians 4:7** - *So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.*
- **Romans 8:17** - *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*
- **Romans 8:23** - *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.*
- **Titus 3:7** - *so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

4. **God's children are adopted into a family.**

- **Romans 1:13** - *I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,[a] that I planned many times to come to you*
- **1 Corinthians 1:10** - *I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*
- **1 Timothy 5:1-2** - *Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.*

5. **God's children are imitators of the Father.**

- **Ephesians 5:1** - *Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children*
- **1 Peter 1:14-16** - *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*
- **Philippians 2:15** - *Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky*

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think our salvation would be like if God granted us regeneration and justification but not adoption?
2. What is your inner response to the list of privileges of adoption outlined in this lesson?
3. How much of a reality is adoption as it regards relationships between churches? How do you think our Father regards the church competition culture that exists in the American church today?

Reading Assignment

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 38: Sanctification.