

The Gospel Wars

Lesson #9 Adoption

I. Lesson Introduction

Following the “new birth” sequence, Regeneration, Saving Faith, Repentance, and Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then comes this next important step in “God’s order of Salvation”. This next step is that we are adopted into God’s family. We become actual sons and daughters, heirs to all that the God-head possesses as Creator God.

“In regeneration God gives us new spiritual life within.

In justification God gives us right legal standing before Him.

But in adoption God makes us members of His family.

Therefore, the biblical teaching on adoption focuses much more on the personal relationships that salvation gives us with God and with His people.” **Taken from Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology; p. 736 - reformatted**

This is a very high calling with great responsibility for God’s saints.

II. Definitions

Adoption: The act of God which makes those, who have been regenerated by the substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus the Christ, to be members of the family of God. This family of God includes the members of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and all who have been redeemed from their sinful nature and made new by The Holy Spirit’s regenerating power into a new creation in Christ, administered through an irreversible, fixed faith in the penal substitutionary blood atoning work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. In adoption, we who are “in Christ”, are made children of the living God throughout all eternity forward.

Non-Adoption: Non-adoption is not a thing to be defined, but logically it means that which is other than divine adoption. Adoption is an exclusive relationship only relevant to those who are “In Christ”.

There is a sense in which all who are born in the flesh are, according to Scripture, immediately sons of Satan, and serve him. But Satan is not a Father in the loving sense of a family, with caring purpose, provision, and protection. This just refers to the obedience to an evil father who cares not for his children.

Ontological: Has to do with the nature of being or existence. The Judeo-Christian God is claimed to be the Prime, eternal, self-existent One who exists by necessity and from which all other existence proceeds. He exists of necessity, or there would be no other thing that could exist. All created things exist derived from the direct creation by this only, eternal, prime One from which all other existence is derived.

Note: There is a sense in which God as Creator of the entire universe and all that is in it, has authority over all things and all beings. All things and beings belong to Him, and that He is due honor and glory from His whole created order. Man derives a level of familial obligation to God as the Father of Creation because man is a derivative of God’s **ontological** nature and man has no standing within the universe apart from God.

Nevertheless, man stands in rebellion against God because of Adam’s fall into depravity and sin. All men are born in this rebellion of depravity, but by their nature are obligated to serve the enemies of God, those being Satan and his fallen angels (demons).

It is in the doctrine of “Adoption” that we actually become children of God and He becomes our Father.

III. Scriptural Basis (Unless Otherwise Noted, all Scripture is from the 1995 New American Standard – Updated edition.)

Relevant Scriptural Passage	Doctrinal Point Addressed
Verses re. Adoption	
Jn 1:11-13 <i>He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.</i>	Those born spiritually of God are to become children of God.

The Gospel Wars

Lesson #9 Adoption

<p>Rom 8:12-17 <i>So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — ¹³for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but <u>you have received a spirit of adoption as sons</u> by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶<u>The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and 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.</u></i></p>	<p>We, who are in Christ, are all brethren with one another.</p> <p>All who are being led by the Holy Spirit are sons & daughters of God.</p> <p>The Holy Spirit testifies with our own spirit that we are adopted children of God.</p>
<p>Rom 8:28-30 <i>And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, <u>so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;</u> ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.</i></p>	<p>This new family of God was planned for in eternity past.</p> <p>Christ has become the firstborn (highest heir) of an immense church of brothers and sisters "<u>in Christ</u>".</p>
<p>Gal 3:23-29 <i>But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, <u>so that we may be justified by faith.</u> ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For <u>you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.</u> ²⁷For all of you who were <u>baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.</u> ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, <u>heirs according to promise.</u></i></p>	<p><u>Purpose clause</u> tells why the Law was our tutor. Being in Christ is the basis of our adoption.</p> <p>If we are in Christ, there are no divisions. We are heirs as sons & daughters in Christ.</p>
<p>Gal 4:4-7 <i>But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, <u>that we might receive the adoption as sons.</u> ⁶<u>Because you are sons,</u> God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷<u>Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.</u></i></p>	<p>The purpose of salvation is to create a holy people unto God.</p> <p>Now that we are adopted, the Holy Spirit testifies that He is our Father. Therefore we are no longer slaves, but sons & daughters, heirs through God.</p>
<p>Verses re. Non-Adoption</p>	
<p>Jn 8:41-44 <i>"You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." ⁴²Jesus 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. ⁴³Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴<u>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.</u></i></p>	<p>The Pharisees were promoting themselves as sons of Abraham. Jesus is denying that they are sons of Abraham or of God, but are rather sons of the devil.</p> <p>The evidence for Jesus' claim is that they do not do the works of Abraham or of God the Father. That is a clear indication that they are <u>not adopted</u> children of God.</p> <p>The same can be legitimately said of "tares" within our churches.</p>
<p>2 Cor 10:3-6 <i>For <u>though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.</u> ⁵We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.</i></p>	<p>Our battle in this life is not against those who are being deceived by Satanic lies, (their flesh) but rather it is spiritual warfare, an attack on those lies & deception in which the lost are trapped.</p>
<p>Eph 2:1-3 <i>And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, <u>according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of</u></i></p>	<p>We Christians were elect unto God from eternity past, but before our own new birth, we <u>were by nature,</u></p>

The Gospel Wars

Lesson #9 Adoption

disobedience. ³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.**

children of wrath, even as the rest. We had not yet been adopted into the family of God.

IV. Church Position and Importance

Our spiritual wealth is never found within ourselves, our outward flesh. This immense and vast reservoir of spiritual wealth is from our Father, through His Son, our brother in the spirit, our brother by adoption. We are commanded to not just be disciples, but rather **to be like Him**:

- in our ministry in this life,
- in our mission/purpose in this life,
- in our methods of spiritual warfare in this life,
- in reflecting Him at all times to the world while we remain on in this life.

2 Cor 5:17-21 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who **reconciled** us to Himself through Christ and gave us the **ministry of reconciliation**, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.** ²¹He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

V. Church Weaknesses, Corruption, and/or Abandonment of True Doctrine

There is a false and wicked doctrine / understanding rampant in our Christian culture that suggests that God is the Father of all men and that all men and women are the children of God. This is often referred to in short hand as **“The Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of men.”** This view sounds so good and loving to the mind of the natural man, but it is not true.

This is a view prominent in “Liberal Theology”, but has become more and more carelessly used within modern Evangelicalism as Evangelicalism marches towards biblical irrelevance. This erroneous theological view has origins in several different sources including such as liberal theologian Adolf Von Harnack, John D. Rockefeller Jr. (part of the Rockefeller family’s credo), Masonic teaching, **Father Divine’s*** teaching, and many liberal churches of the 20th and 21st century.

* **“Father Divine** (c. 1876 – September 10, 1965), also known as **Reverend M. J. Divine**, was an African American spiritual leader from about 1907, until his death. His full self-given name was **Reverend Major Jealous Divine**, and he was also known as "the Messenger" early in his life. He founded the International Peace Mission movement, formulated its doctrine, and oversaw its growth from a small and predominantly black congregation into a multiracial and international church.

Father Divine claimed to be God. He made numerous contributions toward his followers' economic independence and racial equality. He was a contemporary of other religious leaders such as Daddy Grace, Charles Harrison Mason, Noble Drew Ali and James F. Jones (also known as Prophet Jones).” **Wikipedia**

This movement went a long way to promote the old liberal “Social Gospel” of good works which has so corrupted much of modern denominational Christianity.

What is true is that only those who are **“born again”** into relationship with Christ who have been **regenerated** by the Holy Spirit and are brought to **saving faith** by the gift of faith by God the Father, are **indwelt** by the Holy Spirit, and are then **adopted** into the family of God.

VI. Conclusion / Discernment Being Needed

We must defend the gospel, the correct gospel based on correct Biblical doctrine. To water down the gospel must be considered **“anathema”** as used twice in Galatians 1:8-9. Any who teaches a different gospel, *“he is to be accursed”*. “Paul uses **anathema** to declare emphatically and categorically that the gospel he preaches is the one and only way to salvation and that to preach or teach otherwise is to invalidate and nullify the death of Christ. Anyone doing so will be eternally condemned.” **

** **Quotation from:** Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words; entry under “curse”; p. 152.