

TEACHING GOAL

To study the biblical concept of the sonship of believers.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. What is Adoption?
- A. Adoption is the act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

S.C. 34, L.C. 74, W.C. of F. XII, Savoy 12

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Romans 8:12-17

Support Passages: Ephesians 1:3-6, II Corinthians 6:18, Hosea 1:10, Revelation 3:12, Galatians 4:1-7, Psalm 103:13, Hebrews 12:6

BIBLE STORY

Exodus 2:1-10; Moses received the privileges of the palace of Pharaoh by the kind act of his daughter. One who was not born a son became a son by a gracious command.

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." (Romans 8:16-17, ESV)

APPLICATION

We bless God for the wonderful benefits of adoption, such as our privilege to the throne of grace and God's protection and chastening and sealing unto the day of redemption. But we long for that day when with our resurrected bodies we shall realize our full inheritance forever with Christ.

SUMMARY

Those whom God acts to justify, He also acts to adopt into His family of sons. People who were in bondage to sin and sons of darkness were foreknown, predestinated, called, justified and glorified into adoption as sons. Those who were helpless and not sons, were made sons by God's gracious act and given an inheritance to which they were not previously entitled. Adoption, like justification, is a gracious act of God in behalf of sinners. We cannot adopt ourselves into God's family but God must act to adopt us. He does this freely, not because He has to do so. We cannot merit adoption any more than we deserve to be justified.

In Scripture, we find the word adoption referring to an estate of being, into which those who are justified by faith are placed, in which they receive certain benefits, privileges and blessings. Some of these benefits are realized now, in this life, and others only in glory after the resurrection to come.

Romans 8:12-25 mentions both kinds of benefits. In this life we are: (1) led by the Spirit of God, (2) given a spirit of adoption, (3) enabled to call God our father, (*Abba* is Aramaic for the Father which is the term used by Greek and Aramaic Christians in prayer. Rather than treating this term as familiar it should be thought of as proper; similar to our use of Thee and Thou) and, (4) are assured by the Holy Spirit that we are sons.

When our bodies are resurrected: (1) eternal glory will be revealed in us, (2) the rest of creation will be set free from corruption, and (3) our bodies will be redeemed, changed into incorruptible bodies having no curse. Let us notice that all these benefits are the result of an act of God and are not our own doing. The apostle Paul leaves no doubt that we receive adoption as a gracious act of God as he writes, "he **predestined us for adoption** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will," (Ephesians 1:5, ESV) Other scriptures inform us that we have "boldness and confident access" to God (Ephesians 3:12), "as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him" (Psalm 103:12); that He protects His children (Proverbs 14:26), chastens them for their good (Hebrews 12:5-10) and seals them for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

We bless God for all these wonderful and gracious things that He does for us who are His people but we long for that day of resurrection when we, together with all creation, will be with Christ in glory forever.