

100 BIBLE LESSONS

These lessons were originally given at Manila, Philippines, in 1958 and 1959 by former missionary to China, Alban Douglas. Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 3 – ADOPTION

INTRODUCTION

Regeneration begins the new life in the soul when it is born again by the Spirit. Justification deals with our new right standing with God. Adoption admits man into the family of God with filial joy to our Father God.

Regeneration is a changed nature; justification is a changed standing; sanctification is a changed character; while adoption is a changed position.

In regeneration the believer becomes a child of God; in adoption that child receives the position of an adult son; the baby or minor becomes an adult.

Gal. 4:5 - To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Gal. 4:7 - Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Adoption is our growing up into Christ and occupying our new position.

Here are two question for each of us to ponder:

1. Is this standing instantaneous with conversion?
2. Can the adopted son be disinherited and cast away for being a prodigal?

I. THE MEANING OF ADOPTION

Adoption is a Greek word which means, "the placing of a son."

Rom. 8:15 - ...but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Eph. 1:5 - Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself...

In Bible times the word had a twofold meaning:

1. The private act of receiving a stranger into the family as a son.
2. The public, legal ceremonial act of recognizing the son as the heir – something like a "coming out," or "coming of age" party.

Until this ceremony was performed the child actually differed little from servants in the home. The word deals not with our relationship with God but our position before Him. Adoption is the act of God whereby He places the justified believer as an adult son to enjoy the privileges and responsibilities of the position.

In Ex. 2, Moses became the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter with all the rights and privileges of that position when he came of age.

In Heb. 11:24, Moses rejected his Egyptian position for something better, for, *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.*

II. THE CONDITION OF ADOPTION

Adoption has only one condition and that is to abide in Christ – union with Him.

Gal. 3:26 - *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

We do not have to wait until we have been a saint for one year or ten years, but immediately we enter into all the blessings of a fully recognized heir of God.

III. THE TIME OF ADOPTION

1. It occurred before the foundation of the world. Rom. 9:11, *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.* Adoption is a gracious act on the part of God entirely of mercy, we do not deserve or merit this loving favor from a holy God.

2. It actually occurs the moment that one believes in Jesus Christ. 1 John 3:2, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God...* Sonship is a present possession. We can truthfully say, "I'm a child of the King," not His slave but His son and heir. We are not mere children under maids and tutors but adult members of the family.

3. Adoption will be completed at the resurrection when we enter His presence. Rom. 8:23, *...waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* Often in this world we are not recognized as sons of God. On that day we will occupy our rightful positions. Today we may be considered the offscouring of society. Then we will throw off the disguise (this body) and put on the new body.

IV. THE SIGN OF ADOPTION

The sign of adoption is to be led by the Holy Spirit. Rom. 8:14, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* Guidance by the Holy Spirit is the path to sonship and the proof of sonship. The Holy Spirit guides the believer into the truth of

God. Jn. 16:13, *Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.*

Gal. 5:18, *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law; that is, you are delivered from the tutor and schoolmaster; you are free.*

V. THE CRY OF ADOPTION – *Abba Father.*

Rom. 8:15, ... *but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Gal. 4:6, *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Mark 14:36, Jesus in Gethsemane prays, *Abba, Father.* This is a special word of endearment, of close relationship.

“Abba,” is Aramaic, the language of Christ’s childhood. “Father,” is a Greek word, the language of the educated and learned of His day. A slave was never allowed to address his master as, “Abba.”

VI. THE BLESSINGS OF ADOPTION

1. They become objects of God’s peculiar love. Jn. 17:23, ...*and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* – the intimate love relationship of Father and Son.
2. They become objects of the Father’s fatherly care. Luke 12:27-33, the Father God looks after their livelihood as to what they will eat and wear; their occupation and health.
3. They have the family name. 1 John 3:1, ...*we should be called the sons of God.*
4. They have the family likeness. Rom. 8:29, ...*conformed to the image of his Son.*
5. They have the family love. 1 Jn. 3:14, *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren* (and they love us too.)
6. They have the filial spirit, Rom. 8:15, *Abba, Father,* the parent, child relationship.
7. They have the family gathering. Jn. 14:23, *We will come unto him.*
8. They receive fatherly chastisement. Heb. 12:5-11, which proves that they are true sons.
9. They receive fatherly comfort. 2 Cor. 1:4, *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.*
10. They receive the Father’s inheritance. 1 Pet. 1:4, *To an inheritance, incorruptible.*

VII. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADOPTION

Members of the Royal family of heaven must behave with becoming dignity. We are to walk worthy of this high honor in keeping with our position. We must love and serve one another as brothers and sisters in the same family.

Jn. 13:14, If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

Jn. 15:17, These things I command you, that ye love one another.

CONCLUSION

As a child enjoys the free run of the house and the privileges of running into the Father's presence at any time, so does the believer approach God's presence. Those who are adopted into the family of God are led by the Spirit of God. Am I led by the Holy Spirit? Do I have a childlike confidence in my Father? Do I avail myself of this liberty of access into His very own presence? Do I love the brethren, the family of God, as I ought to? Am I a filial son? Am I obedient to the commands the He has given me? Let us leave our spiritual babyhood and live as sons of God; heirs of God.

Sometimes when parents adopt a child they try to keep that fact a secret from their children lest they will feel less than a full son or daughter. The story is told on one child, who knew that he was adopted, and was being teased by another child. "You're just an adopted child," with the inference that probably he was illegitimate or something. However, the child was proud of being adopted and replied, "Yes, I'm adopted. My parents chose me, picked me out of many babies. Your parents had to take what they got."

It is true that we are adopted into God's family; He chose us, Praise His Name.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Distinguish between regeneration, justification and adoption.
2. Give the two Palestinian meanings of adoption and its present Scriptural meaning.
3. What is the condition of adoption?
4. Give the 3 tenses of adoption with one Scripture for each.
5. What is the sign that an individual is adopted into the family of God?
6. Explain, "Abba, Father."
7. List 7 blessings of adoption.

8. What is the relationship between Heb. 12:5-11 and adoption?
9. What is the responsibility of an adopted son (or daughter) to God?
10. What is the blessed privilege of an adopted son?