

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

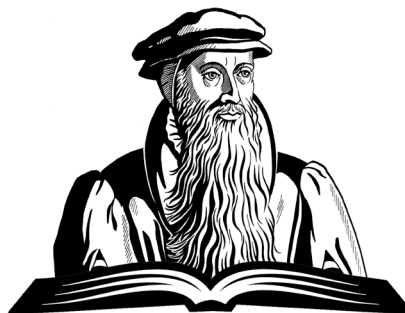
Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

STUDY GUIDE

Module 5:
**SOTERIOLOGY—
THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION**

Lecture 7:
**THE DOCTRINE OF
ADOPTION**



The John Knox Institute
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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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STUDY GUIDE

Module 5

Soteriology—the Doctrine of Salvation

1. Introduction to Soteriology
2. The Doctrine of Union with Christ
3. The Doctrines of Effectual Calling & Regeneration
4. The Doctrine of Saving Faith
5. The Doctrine of Repentance
6. The Doctrine of Justification
- 7. The Doctrine of Adoption**
8. The Doctrine of Sanctification
9. The Doctrine of Good Works
10. The Doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints
11. The Doctrine of Assurance of Grace and Salvation

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Module 5:

SOTERIOLOGY—THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Lecture 7:

The Doctrine of Adoption

Introduction

God's people are born into sin. They're born into the poverty of sin. They're living lives of rebellion against him. They are, in fact, children of the devil, the most evil of tyrants. And they have all of the depravations that come with that sinful status. And God comes and takes the initiative, sovereignly, by his grace, and he adopts a sinner into his family, and bestows upon them the privileges of the new status, as a member of the household and a child of the living God, gives them a new name, provides protection and provision, and indeed promises an eternal inheritance in what is to come. And above all that, the believer has limitless access to the Father, and to his throne, and all of the tender affection of a heavenly Father.

Theme: *The doctrine of Adoption.*

I. Scriptural Basis

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:1–3)

1. God, the eternal, holy God adopts sinful man into his immediate family.
 - a. He bestows all privileges of sonship on those who are so unworthy.
2. The sinful world cannot see this at all.
3. Adoption is an accomplished fact, and an irreversible status.
4. God transforms sinful man into His family likeness.

Questions:

1. “What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us”—what does this mean for the Christian believer?

2. What does it mean to be transformed into God’s family likeness? What shall believers be like at the last day?

II. Doctrinal Overview

As summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 12:

“All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son, Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they’re taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a Father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.”

1. The theological context of Adoption.
 - a. Adoption is a forensic, one-time act.
 - b. Predestination and Adoption.
 - c. Justification and Adoption are distinct, but cannot be separated.
 - d. Regeneration precedes Adoption.
 - e. Adoption and Sanctification.
2. The privileges of Adoption.
 - a. God’s name is put on the believer.
 - b. The believer has access to God’s throne with boldness.
 - c. The believer is enabled to cry, “Abba, Father”.
 - d. The believer is pitied, protected, and provided for by a heavenly Father.
 - e. The believer is chastened/disciplined by the Father.
 - f. The believer is never cast off.

3. The Spirit of Adoption.

- a. Romans 8:14–16, and Galatians 4:5–6.
- b. The joint witness of our spirit with God’s Spirit that we are his children.
- c. A filial trust and affection within God’s people.

Questions

1. Is Adoption an ongoing process or a one-time occurrence? What is the change in status?

2. What is the relationship between Predestination and Adoption? And between Justification and Adoption?

3. How are Regeneration and Adoption related? Which comes first?

4. Explain the relationship between Adoption and Sanctification?

5. What are the privileges that believers have in Adoption? How do these privileges comfort God’s people?

6. Where in Scripture do we see that God's name is given to his people at Adoption?

7. What are the implications of the fact that believers have access to God's throne with boldness?

8. What is the "Spirit of Adoption" in the Scripture?

III. Polemical Exposition

1. Error: *Universal Fatherhood of God.*

a. The world, liberal and unbelieving theologians will say God is the Father of humanity, that all people are the children of God.

2. There are really only three types of divine Fatherhood.

a. The Trinitarian Father (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost)

b. The Creator Father (God created and sustains the whole world)

c. The adoptive Father (God is the adoptive Father to his elect people through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. How should we answer those liberal theologians who claim that God is the Father of all humanity, that all people everywhere are the children of God?

2. What are the only three true categories of God as Father?

3. What are some of the blessed implications of God being an adoptive Father?

IV. Practical Exposition

1. God's love and condescension in adopting sinners is amazing.
 - a. It should cause us to love him, delight in him, be devoted to him, and to want to glorify him.
3. God cares for his elect people as a Father cares for his children.
 - a. This should bring us to cast all of our cares, anxieties, concerns, and burdens on him.
4. God chastens all whom he loves.
 - a. Chastening is painful, but we should be thankful because we know he loves us.
5. The thought of Adoption fuels our worship, prayers, and our whole outlook on life.

Questions:

1. What does it mean when we say that the doctrine of Adoption is the pinnacle of gracious privileges and the goal of redemption?

2. Explain what John Owen meant when he wrote, "If the love of a father will not make a child delight in him, what will?" How does this relate to the doctrine of Adoption?

3. In 1 Peter 5, verse 7, we read: “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” What does this mean, and how can a Christian practice this daily?

4. Why do Christians need to have a thankful response to the chastening of God?

5. How does the thought of Adoption fuel the Christian’s worship, and prayers, and our whole outlook on life?

V. Self-Reflection

Does the study of this lecture help you to better understand the opening address of the Lord’s Prayer, “Our Father which art in heaven”? How does this doctrine of Adoption motivate you as a Christian in your daily duties and service to God? How does this doctrine help you understand the fellowship that Christians have with one another?