

ROMANS

8:14-17

**Abba,
Father!**



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8:14-17



OPENING

In this part of Romans 8, Paul now brings up a number of new topics that mark this pericope as a very unique section. This will be the first time Paul speaks of *adoption* (v.15); “*sons of God*” (v.14); who cry out to Him: “*Abba Father!*” (v.15). Then, Paul will return to the topic of inheritance utilized in 4:13-14. You will also notice that the discussion of “*the Flesh*” (σάρξ) will no longer be mentioned in Romans 8.

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OPENING

Looking ahead, the last Greek word of this section, in v.17: (συνδοξασθῶμεν) will function as a hinge, something that Paul does often in Romans, leading us forward into “Glory (δόξα) (vv.18, 21). This hinge word, which we will exegete, is vastly important for you; since, you’ll be comforted to know that the Spirit is “*directing*” your whole life!

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8:14-16

Children of the
Heavenly “Abba
Father!”
(14-16)

THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.14)

¹⁴Indeed, as many as are being led by the Spirit, these are sons of God.

The beginning phrase is reminiscent of the language which introduced our Lord's temptation in St. Luke 4:1 – “*He was being led in the Spirit into the wilderness.*” The verb form is **passive...Jesus “was being led” “in the Spirit”, just as you are “being led by the Spirit!”** True, there was active participation by Jesus; however, this work of *leading...guiding* is the work of the Holy Spirit that is actually done on or to you!

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Therefore, Paul makes an astounding statement about **YOUR** identity! As a result of the Spirit's presence (vv.9, 11) and direction (v.13), you are actually “*sons of God!*” Paul's language isn't Greek Stoicism, but rather is rooted in the OT and Judaism (cf. Ex. 4:22; Jer. 3:19; 31:9; Hosea 11:1).

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THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.14)

¹⁴Indeed, as many as are being led by the Spirit, these are sons of God.

It's important that you know and understand the importance of “son” or “sonship!” The son is the primary heir as Paul also used in Gal. 4:5-7! He also uses the word “*divine adoption as sons*” in v.15 that is a compound word in Greek: (υιοθεσίας), which we will discuss more in-depth later.

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Children of the
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THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.15)

¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery again, that you should fear, but you received [the] Spirit of divine adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba Father!”

Paul begins with the negative, as he has spoken previously of the “*slavery*” to sin that holds all people in bondage unless or until they are emancipated in Christ Jesus (e.g., 6:6, 18-22). Also, previously, Paul has not associated this slavery with “*a spirit*.” So...what does Paul mean by “*a spirit of slavery?*” He can’t be speaking about the Holy Spirit, could he? No!

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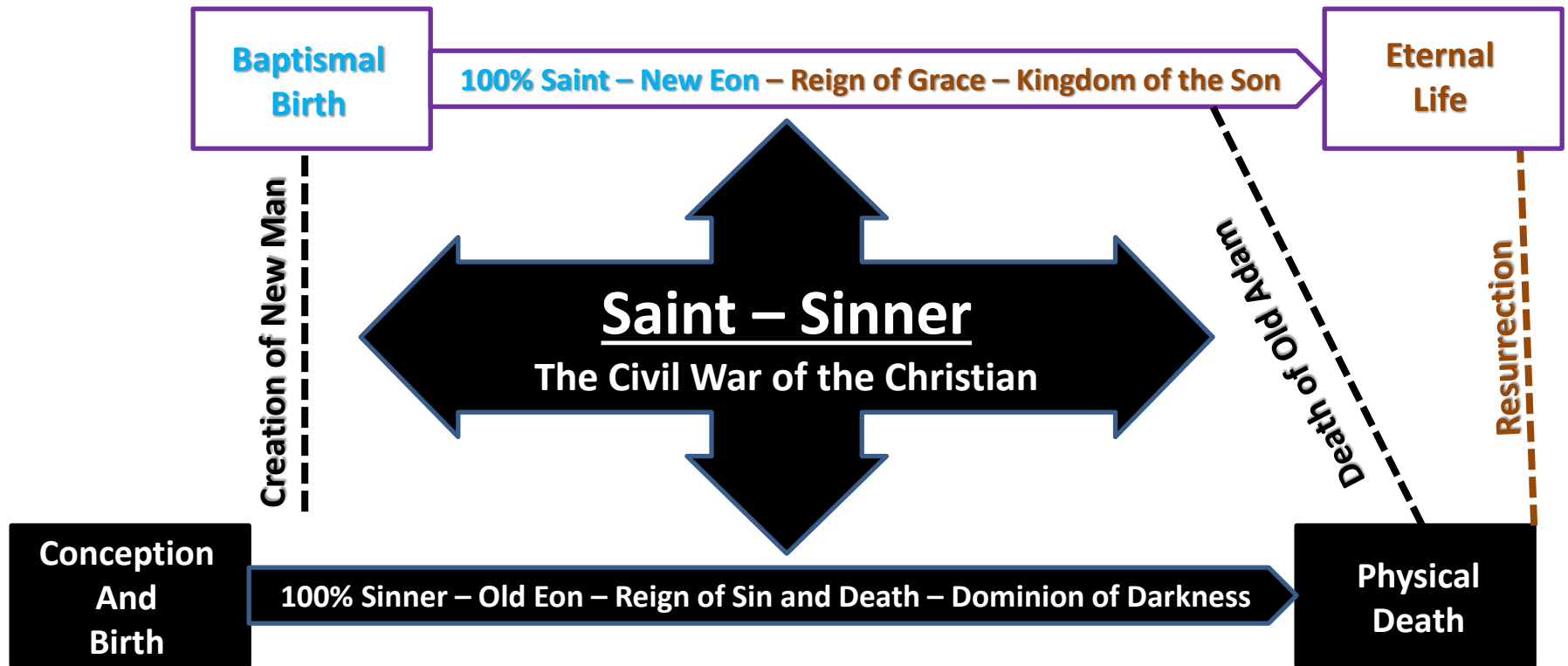
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THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.15)

¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery again, that you should fear, but you received [the] Spirit of divine adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba Father!”

Paul is talking about the “spirit of this age,” the old age or the old eon of slavery to sin and death to which you were physically born (*“Simul iustus et peccator”*). Therefore, there is a contrast between “*slavery*” and “*adoption*”, and secondarily between the enslaving “spirit” and the Spirit who effects adoption!

Simul Iustus Et Pecator



The Christian as Simultaneously Saint and Sinner

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THE SPIRIT’S LEADING (V.15)

¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery again, that you should fear, but you received [the] Spirit of divine adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba Father!”

This is the reason for Paul’s use of the word “again.” “Again” (πάλιν) goes with the noun “slavery” (δουλεία) – meaning that the “Spirit of divine adoption” does not reestablish a state of slavery, which would elicit “fear.”

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THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.15)

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And here is the importance of Holy Baptism! In Baptism, all baptized believers receive the “*Spirit of adoption.*” The Gospel sense of “*receive*” relates that your receiving is done passively...as a gracious gift from God in Christ Jesus!

Additionally, the direct object of receive is the Holy Spirit, not adoption.

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So as Paul has already stated in 6:1-11, you “were baptized into Christ Jesus” and have now died to sin and have risen with Him to new life; indeed, from the moment of your Baptism, you have been living “to God in Christ Jesus” (6:11).

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Children of the
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THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.15)

*¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery again, that you should fear, but you received [the] Spirit of **divine adoption** as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba Father!”*

*“Divine adoption” (υἰοθεσίας), is an objective genitive that’s used by Paul to define your primary benefit that you have “received” from the Holy Spirit. It’s the Holy Spirit that brings about your adoption, uniting you with Jesus and so making you a “*sharer*” in His Sonship. In reality, the Greek word referenced and shown above literally means:*

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THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.15)

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Sonship; to be legally declared an heir. Therefore, the nature and condition of the true disciples of Christ Jesus, who by receiving the Spirit of God into their souls (via Holy Baptism) become the sons (and co-heirs with Jesus Christ) of God!

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THE SPIRIT'S LEADING (V.15)

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Lastly, there is a “not yet” factor involved in our sonship! We are God’s sons; yet, we are still looking forward to the complete fulfillment of that sonship that will happen at “the redemption of our body (cf. 8:23). On Judgment Day, Jesus will declare each of you an eternal co-heir and welcome you into His Kingdom of everlasting Light!

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Children of the
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ABBA, FATHER! (V.15)

¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery again, that you should fear, but you received [the] Spirit of divine adoption as sons, by whom we cry, **“Abba Father!”**

It is because we are “*sons of God*”, by the “*Spirit of divine adoption*” that we can cry: “*Abba, Father!*” The first word is not Hebrew! But Aramaic! It’s a less formal and more intimate form of the word for Father (ba2) (ab). It’s similar to our “Daddy” or “Papa.” It points to a love and intimacy that God allows us as His children.

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ABBA, FATHER! (V.15)

*¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery again, that you should fear, but you received [the] Spirit of divine adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “**Abba Father!**”*

It’s not that we are given freedom here to address God with childish names, but that He wishes us to know that He is not some distant Father, but one who is intimately close to us. As verse 16 goes on to say, He wants us to know that he doesn’t consider us subjects, but family, His children! Of interest, here is St. Mark 14:36 in Greek and English: καὶ ἔλεγεν· αββα ὁ πατήρ (“and He said, ‘Abba, Father!’”). Our Father is a very different Lord, indeed!

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Children of the
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¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Rejoice! The Holy Spirit grants you even more privileges as God’s adopted sons! The verb that Paul uses (συμμαρτυρεῖ) is the first of four very rare compound words that he will use in 16-17. All four have the prefix of “συν/μ (soon[m]) meaning: “*with!*” In this case, the verb Paul uses announces that the testimony to the fact that we are God’s children is upheld! How? By the Holy Spirit! *The Spirit Himself* testifies; His personal testimony! God is testifying that you are His child!!!

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¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Also in this verse is the only reference in Romans 8 of “*our spirit!*” This is our “human spirit” as distinguished from the “flesh.” Thus, the “*our spirit*” is a “second witness” to whom the Holy Spirit communicates His revelatory power. The testimony of “*our spirit*” reveals to us how the Holy Spirit is not only instrumental in making us God’s children; He also makes it aware to us that we are God’s children!

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Heirs of God
with Christ
Jesus

17Now, if children, also heirs—indeed, heirs of God now joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], so that also we may be glorified together.

Now Paul will spell out for us the ramifications of being God's children! First, the blessing of being "children" of God is that we are "heirs" (κληρονόμοι). So, as heirs of God's kingdom, you are exalted by faith to the dignity of sons of Abraham and so of sons God; and hence, receive the blessings of God's kingdom promised to Abraham!

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Heirs of God
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¹⁷Now, if children, also heirs—indeed, heirs of God now joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], so that also we may be glorified together.

This is a recurring theme in the OT. Being heirs is due to God's grace, mercy, and love (cf. Dt. 4:37; 7:6-8; 10:15). Please remember, Paul insisted that Abraham's inheritance came not through the Law, but through faith in the Promise (4:13, 14). This is now true for you as offspring of Abraham.

Addendum

Galatians 3 & 4 - And Sonship!

The language of Galatians 3 is very close to Romans 8:17. In Gal 3:18, the inheritance was granted to Abraham by God...through the promise...; it cannot be from the Law. The same promise is received by Abraham's offspring, who is ultimately One: Christ Jesus (Gal 3:16). Now all of you who are "of Christ" are also Abraham's offspring and, therefore, also "heirs according to [the] promise" (Gal 3:29).

Addendum



Galatians 3 & 4 - And Sonship!

This brings us to Gal 4:5-7 which speaks even more generally of those who are adopted as sons! God sent “his Son” (4:4), “so that we might receive adoption (as sons)” (4:5), and since “you are sons”, God sent “the Spirit of His Son” into your hearts, crying out to God, “Abba, Father” (4:6)! With the result that every son is “also an heir through God” (4:7). True, there’s no direct reference to Abraham in Gal 4; however, his presence is apparent from the end of Gal 3!

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17Now, if children, also heirs—indeed, heirs of God now joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], so that also we may be glorified together.

Back to v.17, and there is even more:

“indeed, heirs of God now joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], so that also we may be glorified together.”

The “if indeed” makes a major implication that in our present time and life, it is expected, and often a very difficult reality that we will suffer; since, we are “joint-heirs with Christ!”

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Heirs of God
with Christ
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¹⁷Now, if children, also heirs—indeed, heirs of God now joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], so that also we may be glorified together.

The third very rare compound verb is used by Paul: *“we suffer with”* (συμπάσχομεν). **This verb brings to mind our death and burial with our Lord Jesus in Holy Baptism. As we have seen, Paul references that event, in Romans 6:3-8, with the use of past tense (Divine) passive verbs. Yet, this compound verb here is in the present tense; thus, the suffering with Christ that Paul speaks of is a current and ongoing experience which flows from Holy Baptism, but not equated to that one-time past event!**

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Heirs of God
with Christ
Jesus

¹⁷Now, if children, also heirs—indeed, heirs of God now joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], so that also we may be glorified together.

We suffer with Christ points us to the final clause of this section, “so that also we may be glorified together”, and this is Paul’s fourth and last very rare compound verb (συνδοξασθῶμεν). Literally, it joins together the two Greek words of “with” and “glorify.” Properly, it means to be glorified together, stressing close identity with Jesus; which specifically correlates to the unique glorification believers will experience at His return (cf. Phil 3:11; 1 John 3:2). This compound verb only occurs in this verse.

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8:17



Heirs of God
with Christ
Jesus

Suffering

St. Paul does not mean that we will *only* become fellow heirs with Christ if we first consent to suffer with Him, as though that were a prerequisite for our sonship. Our baptismal incorporation into Christ (6:1-11) and reception of the “*Spirit of adoption*” (v.15) are sufficient to secure our current status as sons and heirs. Being a child of God, does entail suffering in this world. Yet, our suffering is focused forward. After enduring our present state of suffering with Christ, we will be glorified by God with Christ, just as our fellow heir, Jesus, suffered before entering His glory (e.g., Phil 2:6-11).

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Paul's concluding assertion in this section is about our Lord Jesus! By the time we arrived at v.17, Paul has moved effectively from “flesh” *or* “Spirit” past “dead” *and* “alive,” and even through the Holy Spirit of adoption, sonship, and inheritance, to conclude with Jesus Christ. He is our fellow Heir, the One with whom we now suffer and, ultimately, the One with whom we will be eternally glorified!

Conclusion

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Conclusion

Finally, the combination of present suffering in anticipation of future glory serves as a hinge, again, into a new section of Chapter 8. In vv.18-30, Paul proceeds to apply the same extraordinary connection between the present state and the future hope of both Christian and creation.

Please join us next week!



ANY
QUESTIONS

ROMANS 8:18-23



**Next
Week:
Part I**

Creation

And

Christians!