

Romans 8:12-19 (NKJV)

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

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

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

1

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

17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

2

Romans 8 is a chapter of victory!

- It tells how children of God can become victorious over sinning in their Christian lives
- It tells how they can progress from being mere *children* of God to *sons* of God, *sons to glory* (Heb. 2:10)
- It tells of the future revealing of the sons of God as a new order of rulers who will ascend to positions of rulership formerly held by angelic beings
- It tells how this revealing will accompany the restoration of Earth to its former glory

3

Romans 8 is a chapter of victory!

- It tells how this is the culmination of God’s plan for mankind and how all creation is eagerly awaiting this, even now (and that is evident in man’s inner longings for a utopian world and his headlong pursuit of communism, which is a Satanic counterfeit)
- It tells of the marvelous love of God in leading and training these sons to glory, preparing them for glorification

4

This is the purpose for your salvation!

- It’s not so you can go to Heaven when you die
- It’s so you can draw upon your spiritual provision – Jesus Christ living within – to live victoriously and thereby experience the saving of your soul so you can qualify to co-rule with Him in His kingdom
- That is the **ULTIMATE** purpose for eternal life (life for the age)
- But you must qualify for this degree of salvation; it is **NOT** automatic

5

- Before God’s sons can be revealed, they must be prepared – and that is ongoing in the present age

8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

- vs. 1-11 are about the importance of believers choosing to cooperate with God and walk in the Spirit rather than in the flesh

6

- A great deal of emphasis is placed upon the importance of having our minds SET on the things of the Spirit rather than the flesh
- Paul goes so far as to say this is our obligation
- Now that Christ has delivered us from sin's power, we are indebted, not to live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit

7

Griffith Thomas, *Commentary on Romans*:

We are debtors to live "after the Spirit," and this necessarily means a mortification of everything fleshly and sinful. It is only as we fulfil these obligations that we can realise our true life of sonship and look forward with absolute assurance to the coming glory.

- Those believers who remain indebted to the flesh, even though they have been delivered from sin's power, are carnal and do not have that assurance

8

- *carnal* – from the Latin root word *carn*, which means "flesh" (e.g., carnivorous, carnage, chili con carne, carnival)
- God says to believers:
8:6a To be carnally minded is death.

9

- In 7:9 Paul admitted that he "died" (spiritually) when he gave in to sin
- His fellowship with God was instantly severed
7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.
- In the context, Paul is referring to legalism, which caused him to stumble and sin
- But whether referring to legalism or license, sin deadens

10

- Thus, to summarize 8:12-13 (paraphrase):
"Don't succumb to the flesh – for fleshliness produces deadness! On the other hand, if you put to death the deeds of the body (your fleshly choices to sin) by depending on the Holy Spirit, you will live – you will have vibrancy of spiritual life."
- DEATH and LIFE mentioned in this text are not merely referring to here and now; that is, in this present age – for how we live our lives NOW, determines how we will live out our lives in the next age – the millennial age

11

- The choices you are making today will either come back to haunt you in the next age or they will come back to bless you – that principle begins to unfold in v. 14:

8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

- Those who choose to walk in the Spirit as their mode of life are considered God's SONS
- Aren't ALL believers God's sons? Technically, no!

12

• Because of mistranslations in the KJV, many have been led to believe we are all God's sons

John 1:12 (KJV) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Phil 2:15 (KJV) That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

1 John 3:1a (KJV) Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:

13

• The word SONS in these verses is not correct

• In all of the verses mentioned, the Greek word translated *sons* is *teknon*

• But *teknon* doesn't mean *son*; it means *child* (actually, *children* in the plural)

• *children* = posterity, regardless of age, male and female

• Believers are repeatedly called "children of God" in the NT, because we are God's posterity, regardless of our age

14

• When we were saved, He re-created us spiritually (2 Cor. 5:17), thus we are His *children*

• The word *teknon* is used in v. 16

8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Zane Hodges: This verse is often misunderstood as a reference to some kind of inner (mystical) witness *to* (as opposed to *with*) our human spirit that gives us a subjective assurance that we are born again. Paul knows nothing of this kind of "inner witness."

15

John Niemela, note in Hodges's Commentary: The popular view [of this verse] is that the Holy Spirit witnesses *to* our human spirit, rather than *along with* our spirit ... The form of the word ... argues for seeing both the Holy Spirit and our human spirit jointly giving testimony that we are regenerate, because both know that we believed Christ's promise of everlasting life.

• If you doubt that you are God's child, even though you have believed on Jesus for eternal life, it is very likely because you were TAUGHT to doubt by some preacher who holds to incorrect theology

16

Bob Wilkin, note in Hodges's Commentary: Taking Rom 8:16 as a verse about assurance of everlasting life not only misunderstands the passage entirely, but actually strips believers of assurance since they cease looking to Christ's promise only (e.g., John 5:24). Instead, they now look introspectively for some sort of mysterious feeling. Such a practice is self-defeating since our feelings cannot be objectified or trusted.

• If you believed on Jesus, then take God at His Word that you possess eternal life, whether or not you have "warm fuzzies" in your soul

17

8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

• *children* = the Gr. word *teknon*

• However, the Gr. word *huios* = *son*

• *huios* is not used in the NT to refer to all children of God – only some children of God are considered *huios*, or *sons*

Robert Govett: We become '*children* of God' by His grace. We become '*sons* of God' by obedience.

18

Arlen Chitwood, *God's Firstborn Sons*:

All Christians are referred to as “children” (Gk., *teknon*), but Scripture does not use “sons” (Gk., *huios*) in the same all-encompassing manner. Though all Christians are “sons” because of *creation*, the New Testament usage of the Greek word *huios*, referring to Christians through this means, appears only within contexts where *regality* is seen and *where Christians are seen actively progressing toward the goal set before them*. In this respect, the word is used relative to Christians in complete keeping with that which “sonship” portends — with *rulership*.

19

- There are only three texts of Scripture in which the word *sons* is applied to Christians – Rom. 8, Gal. 3-4, Heb. 12 –and in all three of these instances, the concept of *adoption* is also discussed (*adoption* is also discussed in Eph. 1, but not concurrent with the word *sons*)
- The word *adoption* in Greek is *huiothesia*
- In Greco-Roman culture, adoption was the idea of declaring an ADULT as one’s legal child and heir, and given all the rights and privileges of the father, even if that one was not the natural firstborn child

20

- Add to that the picture of Jewish adoption in the Scriptures
- Sons would typically receive an equal inheritance of the father’s wealth
- But one son was particularly chosen to take on the father’s name and business affairs and would continue as spiritual leader of the family
- He would receive a double portion so as to enable him to carry out his responsibilities

21

- Typically, that would be the firstborn, but sometimes the firstborn was disinherited and another would be chosen
- Example: Jacob had twelve sons, who each received an equal portion of his estate upon his death
- Reuben (firstborn) was disinherited from that position for sinning against his father
- Instead, Joseph – who was much younger – was chosen as firstborn for being faithful, and his two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh) were both honored as inheritors

22

- In the NT – the prodigal son, essentially disinherited himself by his behavior, until he repented and returned back home
- The father held a feast and put on him the best robe and the father’s signet ring – signifies the returned son was being promoted to firstborn son
- The elder son had an attitude of arrogance and non-repentance, so he was essentially disinherited – he represents the Pharisees in the text, while the restored prodigal represents repentant Israelites

23

- Notice what happens to those believers who are led by the Spirit of God
- 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons [Gr. *huios*] of God.
- 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [Gr. *huiothesia*] by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”
- Those believers who consistently walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh will be rewarded with adoption – the position of firstborn inheritor when they meet Jesus

24

- They will receive a double inheritance
- Incidentally, Paul encourages the believers to aspire to this status of adoption by walking in the Spirit – for they have not received a spirit that will lead them back into enslavement to sin via legalism
- Rather, they have received the Holy Spirit of God, who leads believers to adoption
- He is seeking out sons to glory – those who can refer to God as “Abba, Father,” which is a term of endearment reserved for those who are in close fellowship with Him

25

Zane Hodges Commentary:

In Paul’s much earlier epistle to the Galatians, he clearly distinguished between a “minor child” (*nepios*) and a “son” (*huios*). The former is a child “not yet of legal age” ... who is under the governance of a tutor (the law), while the latter is the “adult son” who is no longer under this tutor (see Gal 4:1-7). If the Galatians passage is compared carefully with Rom 8:14-17, their similarities will be quite obvious.

26

Zane Hodges Commentary (cont’d):

Both passages contain the words for “son” (Gal 4: 4, 6; Rom 8:14 [also vv 19, 29, 32]) and “heir” (Gal 4:1, 7; Rom 8:14, 17). Both refer to the Spirit’s cry, “Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15), and both use the word “adoption” (*huiiothesia*: Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15) in the technical sense of “adoption of children” ...

27

Zane Hodges Commentary (cont’d):

In the light of Paul’s teaching in Gal 4:1-7, it is natural here to take the expression *the sons of God* ... as a reference to the life-experience of the adult son who is not under the law. In contrast to the earlier struggle (described in Rom 7:7-25) in which the regenerate inner man strived vainly to fulfill God’s law, now the one *led by the Spirit* lives the life of an adult son who is no longer under the law.

28

- Hodges’s point: Only those believers who learn to walk according to the Spirit of adoption (in liberty & freedom) rather than according to some system of legalism (in bondage & fear) will be adopted as sons to receive the double portion of inheritance, for they are being *led by* (i.e., *walking in*) the Spirit
- **THEY ARE NOT LICENTIOUS, NOR ARE THEY LEGALISTS!**

29

- In the context of both Romans and Galatians, Paul is condemning legalism, thus legalists will NOT inherit a place of rulership in the kingdom, for they remain juvenile and have not matured as adults
- Think of the high percentage of Christians who live licentiously, on the one hand, and those who live legalistically, on the other
- Presumably, they will NOT be inheritors in the kingdom of Christ
- Traditionalists believe this is automatic – example: Patch-the-Pirate children’s song

30

I am adopted; I'm a child of the King.
God is my Father, and he owns ev'rything.
He walks beside me; He's my very best friend.
Praise God, I'll never be lonely again.

My Father chose me, and He loves me, I know.
He will be with me wherever I go.
I'll never worry; I have joined royalty.
I am a member of the King's family.

I'm adopted, hallelujah! I've got a new song.
I'm adopted, hallelujah! I fin'ly belong.
I've got a brand new family overflowing with love.
I'm a child of my Father above.

31

- Those lyrics represent commonly-held theology in evangelical Christianity, including fundamentalist Christianity
- But that is erroneous theology that came out of the Reformation
- You are not automatically adopted when you are saved
- You will be adopted at the Judgment Seat of Christ, IF Jesus deems that you lived righteously, walking in the Spirit consistently

32

- Otherwise, you will NOT be adopted, and you will not receive the standing of a mature, firstborn son
 - You will NOT receive the double inheritance
 - You will merely receive the basic inheritance that all children of God receive
- 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children [Gr. *teknon*] of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

33

- ALL children of God are Christ's basic heirs
- They will be resurrected before the Millennium and will dwell in His kingdom, but NOT in the realm of the kingdom of heaven (New Jerusalem)
- Only the "good and faithful" children who hear "well done" will be adopted and given the double inheritance of co-heirship with Christ
- They will also be co-glorified with Him

34

- They will co-rule with Him in New Jerusalem, which will hover over the earth, as the heavenly realm of the kingdom, where Christ will dwell with His bride
- Those children of God who hear the verdict "wicked and lazy servant" will be consigned to the darkness outside New Jerusalem
- In other words, they will dwell on the earth, consciously regretting that they did not walk in the Spirit and thereby qualify for double inheritance

35

Zane Hodges Commentary:

In the Christian family there are both children (*heirs of God*) and also a Firstborn Son [v. 29, *that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*] ... This second heirship—co-heirship with Christ—is predicated on "co-suffering" that leads to "co-glorification." ... The word *if* ... indicates the conditional nature of this statement. It is false grammar to say that the "if" clause treats this as a definite fact. The construction means no more than the expression "on the assumption that" and leaves fully open the opposite possibility.

36

- What is the prerequisite to adoption and co-rulership with Christ?
- v. 14 makes clear that it is being *led by* (i.e., *walking in*) the Spirit
- v. 17 adds the condition, IF we suffer with Him (i.e., with Jesus)

37

G.H. Lang, Firstborn Sons:

The sharing of Christ's sufferings now is our training and qualifying for sharing His glory hereafter; as well as the glory being the compensation graciously promised for the sufferings ... Those who refuse the distinction between simple heirship to God and joint heirship with the Messiah, make the former as well as the latter to become conditional upon suffering with Christ; and thus would the loss of those who avoid suffering become vastly greater, their salvation itself being imperilled.

38

- Some Christians never suffer with Jesus
- 2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.
- If you haven't suffered for Him, it is likely you haven't been living godly in Christ Jesus
- John 15:20 If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

39

1 Pet 4:12-13 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

40

- Paul's heart-cry:
- Phil 3:10-11 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the [out]-resurrection from the dead.
- So there is a condition for being adopted as a firstborn son, and the condition is persevering in righteous living through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, and enduring the sufferings of Christ for His glory

41

2 Tim 2:12 If we endure [KJV: *suffer*, because it is enduring in suffering], we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

- This has nothing to do with salvation; it is in the context of sanctification unto reward
- Paul shares a comforting thought in Rom. 8:18

Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

42

- Anything we might have to endure for Jesus' sake during our lifetime of 70 or 80 years is nothing compared to the glory He will reveal in us during the next thousand years

2 Cor 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

- Though our present sufferings are real, they are "light" compared with the reward for suffering – a superlative degree of glory in the next age! What a marvelous thought!

43

- He will reveal His glory in us, that is, in those believers who are led of the Spirit and are therefore deemed adopted as sons

G.H. Lang, *World Chaos*: Romans 8:19-25. The passage speaks of "the revealing," the unveiling, "of the sons of God" as being their "adoption." This word does not refer to the new birth into the family of God, but to the final possible outcome of that birth. The Roman noble could choose any one of his male children to be heir to his titles and estates. This youth he led before the Senate and declared in due form that this was his son and heir.

44

G.H. Lang, *World Chaos (cont'd)*:

Thereupon the robe of a youth was removed and he was given that of manhood. Similarly, it is not yet made manifest to the universe which of the family of God will reign with Christ; but when the present body of humiliation gives place to a body like unto the glorified body of Christ it will be made clear: "When Christ [Who is already] our life shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

45

- So many assume Col. 3:4 is automatic for all believers, but it is not
- In the context of Col. 3, this reward is conditional, for those who qualify
- Paul talks there about putting off sins and putting on the graces of our Lord Jesus Christ
- He concludes the chapter with these words:

Col 3:23-24 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

46

Col 3:25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

- How marvelous to think the adopted sons of God will be revealed in full glory!
- *glory* = encasement in light in full splendor (think of Christ's transfiguration and the OT shekinah glory)
- God is literally going to share some of His glory with His adopted sons, for all to see
- Presently, if you are living godly in Christ Jesus, then you are suffering in some manner

47

- People revile you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for Jesus' sake
- They despise you and treat you disdainfully, as if you don't know what you're talking about
- They brand you a heretic
- Surprisingly, a high percentage of the persecution comes from other Christians who disagree with you

48

1 Cor 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!

11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.

12-13 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

49

- Most of this treatment Paul received at the hands of the Jews, his own countrymen, who were believers in an OT sense
- They could not tolerate his teaching about Jesus and kingdom inheritance
- Do you ever get treated like that? If not, then perhaps you are not living godly in Christ Jesus
- If you are enduring suffering of some type, be assured – those who think you are scum will one day see you revealed in full glory as an adopted son of God

50

- When you are revealed as a son to glory, they will be amazed that the one they despised and rejected is being honored by Jesus and held in high esteem as one of the rulers of the new age, in full glory
- Whereas in the present age they view you as a mere caterpillar, a worm, they will one day see you in full glory as a magnificent butterfly ...
- And one having power and authority as delegated to you by Jesus Himself

51

That is why Paul can say:

8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

- The revealing of God's glorified sons is coming, child of God, so don't lose heart!
- Stay the course and persevere, by the grace of God
- Keep walking in the Spirit

52