

What We Teach

SALVATION

Regeneration

Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming ([Romans 8:17](#); [2 Peter 1:4](#); [1 John 3:2-3](#)).

[Romans 8:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷“And **“if”** children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.”

The emphasis in [Romans 8:17-18](#) on believers' glory is closely related to their adoption as God's children (see [vv. 14-16](#)).

[Romans 8:14-16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.”

As is clear from that preceding context, the “if” in [verse 17](#) does not carry the idea of possibility or doubt but of reality and causality and might be better translated “because.” In other words, because *all* believers have the leading of the Holy Spirit ([v 14](#)) and His witness ([v. 17](#)) that they are indeed **children** of God, they are thereby **heirs also**.

The heavenly angels not only serve God directly but also serve believers, because they are God's children and heirs. “**Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?**” the writer of Hebrews asks rhetorically ([Hebrews 1:14 NASB](#)). Because of our faith in His Son Jesus Christ, God the Father “**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light**” ([Colossians 1:12 NASB](#)).

As previously explained in other teachings, Paul's figure of adoption seems to correspond more to Roman law and custom than to Jewish. We might expect this, because Paul was writing to believers in Rome. And although many of them doubtless were Jewish, if their families had lived there for several generations, they would be as familiar with the Roman custom as the Jewish.

In Jewish tradition, the eldest son normally received a double portion of his father's inheritance. In Roman society, on the other hand, although a father had the prerogative of giving more to one child than to the others, normally all children received equal shares. And under

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Roman law, inherited possessions enjoyed more protection than those that were bought or worked for. Perhaps reflecting those Roman customs and laws, Paul's emphasis in this passage is on the equality of God's children and the security of their adoption.

Paul told the Galatians, “**And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise**” ([Galatians 3:29 NASB](#); cf. [Galatians 4:7](#)).

[Galatians 4:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷“**Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.**”

Here Paul is referring to spiritual heritage, citing Abraham, “**the father of all who believe**” ([Romans 4:11](#)), as the human archetype of the adopted child and heir of God.

[Romans 4:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“**And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them.**”

CONFIRMATION OF SALVATION—[Romans 8:14-17](#)

[Romans 8:14-17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴“**For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

¹⁵“**For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”**

¹⁶“**The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.**”

¹⁷“**And “if” children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.**”

Verse number fourteen literally reads, “**For as many as are led by God's Spirit, these are God's sons.**” In the Greek text there is no definite article (the word “**the**”) with “**sons.**” This makes the verse more emphatic. The construction of the verse without the definite article indicates *character or kind*. The statement means that those who are led by God's Spirit have or display the character or nature of God's sons. They not only belong to the family, but they act like it!

As we continue, we note that men are in one of three spiritual conditions.

1. They are without the Holy Spirit.
2. They are saved and indwelt by the Spirit.
3. The Spirit of God has control of them.

There are many folks who are saved, but not surrendered to the Lord. We are to be led by the Spirit of God in our lives. We are new creatures in Christ and have received the spirit of adoption. We cry “**Abba Father.**” Abba is the cry of an infant child. The word “**Abba**” is an Aramaic word that means “**Papa or Daddy.**” It is a term of endearment of a child for a father.

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Among the Jews, slaves were forbidden to use this term for their master. The Jews were forbidden to use this term in reference toward God too. Jesus, however, used this term because God was His father.

Mark 14:36 (NASB)

³⁶“And He was saying, ‘Abba! Father!’ All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Through the miracle of salvation, we have been brought into a position of close intimacy with our heavenly Father. This is the kind of intimacy that Jesus enjoyed. The Holy Spirit that indwells us confirms our relationship with Jesus Christ. He bears witness with our spirit.

Let me say at this point that the Holy Spirit is not an “it”, the Spirit of God is a “He.” The translation of [verse 16](#), and also in [verse 26](#), referring to the Holy Spirit as an “it” is a poor translation and contradicts doctrinal truth concerning the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:16 (KJV)

¹⁶“The Spirit **itself** beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

Romans 8:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“The Spirit **Himself** testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Romans 8:26 (KJV)

²⁶“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit **itself** maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Romans 8:26 (NASB)

²⁶“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit **Himself** intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

A better translation would be, “**the Spirit Himself.**” Orthodox Christianity has always held to the fact of the personality of the Holy Spirit. He is a living person who dwells within our hearts Paul says that when we were saved, we received the spirit of adoption. Beloved, when we are saved, we are adopted in Christ which means being placed as an adult son. A baby cannot walk, speak, make decisions, or draw upon the wealth of the inheritance. Christians, however, can do these things the moment they are saved. We are joint heirs in Jesus Christ. Baby Christians have the same privileges as the Christian who has been saved for over 50 years.

Adoption in Rome was serious and complicated. Understanding the Roman system of adoption will help us understand what Christ has done for us. Roman adoption was always considered more serious and more difficult by the Roman *patria potestas* which was the **power of the father** over his family. The father’s power was considered absolute. He had absolute control and the power of life or death in his home. When it came to his father, the Roman son

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never came of age. He was always under the power and control of his father no matter how old he was. Because of this fact, adoption into another family was difficult and very serious.

When someone was adopted he had to pass from the power of one father to the power and control of another father. **Two steps were involved in this process.**

1. Step one was known as *mancipatio* which was carried out by a symbolic scale. Copper and scales were used in a symbolical fashion. The symbolism of the sale was carried out three times. The real father would symbolically sell his son twice and twice he would buy him back. On the third symbolical sale, he would not buy his son back, breaking his power and control over his son.

2. Step two was the *vindicatio* which was a ceremony that followed the sale of the son. The father that was adopting the son went to one of the Roman magistrates known as the *praetor* and presented a case that was legal for the purpose of adopting the son and putting him under his power and control or *patria potestas*. When all the legal red-tape was completed, the son was adopted into the family.

Before salvation, an unsaved person is under the power and control of Satan. He is the spiritual father of an unsaved person ([John 8:44](#)). When we trust Christ as our Savior, we are adopted into God's family, we become sons of God, God is our father, and the power of Satan is broken in our lives. We have the power to say "No" to sin. We have been purchased by the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:20 (NASB)

²⁰ "For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."