

Adoption as Sons – Part 2

Romans 8:16-17

September 10, 2020

Three blessings given to the person indwelt by the Holy Spirit:

1. The blessing of adoption as a son of God (14-15)

2. The blessing of the witness of the Holy Spirit (16)

“bears witness with our spirit”

1. There is a second possible way to translate this— NET “bears witness **to** our spirit”
2. What is the difference?
 - Bearing witness **WITH** our spirit
 - Both the indwelling Holy Spirit and our human spirit together bear witness that we are a child of God
 - Bearing witness **TO** our spirit
 - The Holy Spirit bears witness to our spirit (heart) that we are a child of God, and thus enables us to cry “Abba! Father!” (15)
3. The Greek verb has the following meanings:
 - 1. To bear witness with. To attest or confirm something as one witness along with another or several others.
 - 2. To confirm.¹
4. C. E. B. Cranfield has, for good reason, objected to the interpretation of bearing witness with our spirit, writing, “What standing has our spirit in *this* matter? Of itself it surely has no right at all to testify to our being sons of God.”²
5. The verse means that the Holy Spirit directly assures us that we are now children of God, and that the Holy Spirit’s witness affects the deepest and innermost part of our beings.

Other sources of assurance of salvation include:

1. The written word of God, including God’s promise of salvation to everyone who believes
2. Evidence of a new nature imparted by the Holy Spirit (1 John)

Just as it is possible to quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19), it is also possible to ignore the witness of the Holy Spirit in favor of doubts.

We must not look to the witness of the Spirit alone for assurance of salvation.

At the same time, we must not minimize the blessing of the witness of the Holy Spirit

¹ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), 4:508-509.

² Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1:403.

The witness of the Holy Spirit gives us confidence to approach God in prayer as our Heavenly Father (verse 15)!

3. The blessing of an inheritance from God (17)

Question: What does God have in store for the believer in eternity?

“and if children, then heirs”

1. One of the main purposes of Greek and Roman adoption
2. In its literal sense, the term means someone chosen to receive property as the result of another’s death.
3. An heir has been chosen to receive an inheritance
4. In the Bible, ‘inheritance’ often speaks of a permanent and secure possession that has been assured to God’s people. It is usually something that will be received from God in the future, as here in Romans.
 - **1 Pet. 1:3–5** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
5. We are heirs by God’s grace
6. Elsewhere, Paul also speaks of the Holy Spirit assuring us of the inheritance
 - **Eph. 1:13–14** “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

“heirs of God”

1. God is our Father who will give us an inheritance in the future
2. The inheritance encompasses all the blessings God will give to us when we are glorified, and will continue to give on into eternity
3. The greatest part of the inheritance will be the full, eternal, blessed presence of our God
 - In a sense, God is our inheritance
 - **Josh. 13:33** “But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, just as he said to them.”

- **Rev. 21:3** “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’”
- **Rev. 22:3–4** “No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.”
- Speaks of fullness of communion with God, a communion that exceeds that experienced by the greatest heroes of the faith in this world

“and fellow heirs with Christ”

1. Adoption by grace into God’s family makes us fellow heirs with Christ
2. Also a result of union with Christ
3. The inheritance includes ruling with Christ over God’s kingdom
 - **Luke 22:28–30** “You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
 - **Rev. 3:21** “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”
 - **Rev. 20:4** “Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and **reigned with Christ** for a thousand years.”
4. The inheritance includes the face-to-face communion with the Father we just studied
 - cf. 15 “Abba! Father!”

“provided we suffer with him”

1. Before Christ was raised with a glorified body and sat down at the right hand of the Father, He had to suffer
2. We too must suffer before entering glory
3. To suffer with Christ is to suffer for His sake in union with Him
 - **Acts 9:4–5** And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

4. Suffering with Christ has great value

- **Phil. 3:10** “that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,”
- **Rom. 5:3–5** “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

“in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

1. **Rom. 5:2b** “and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”
2. We will see the glory of God
 - **Matt. 5:8** “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”
 - **John 17:24** Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
3. Our character will be conformed to Christ’s glorious character, and our body to His glorious body
 - **1 John 3:2** “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”
 - **Phil. 3:20–21** “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”
 - **Rom. 8:29** “...predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...”
4. We will share in Christ’s glory
5. This is what God has in store for His adopted children

Conclusion

Question: How should we be affected by the truths in these verses?