

# Ladies Bible Study

## Week 11

(Week 16 in your lessons)



February 10, 2026

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Paul is saying, “now then, there is not one (single) condemnation, nothing to condemn, no sentence for those in Christ Jesus. This no-condemnation status applies to a particular group of people, and is limited namely, to those \_\_\_\_\_ Christ Jesus. The crux of this verse pivots on the meaning of the phrase, “them which are in Christ Jesus.” Nothing more nor less than to be in Christ is needed for a no-condemnation standing before God. According to Paul our position is totally dependent upon God’s grace and not human works.

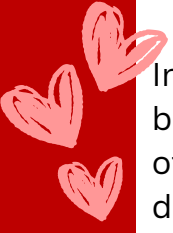
Some of the characteristics of those in Christ are:

- They have Divine Life – Romans 6:11,23
- They have been sanctified - 1 Cor. 1:2
- God is the source of their being in Christ – 1 Cor. 1:30
- They are new creatures – 2 Cor. 5:17
- Sons of God – Gal. 3:26
- Saints – Col. 1:2

As these verses indicate, our no-condemnation position in Christ has been provided for us on the basis of Grace.

Paul’s big problem in Chapter 7 was that the law of sin was engaged in battle with the law of his mind – continually making him captive of sin. As he continues in the same context, for there were no chapter divisions in the original, the prime requisite is to subdue and defeat the law of sin. He now begins to reveal the Divine strategy for doing this by introducing the superior "law of the Spirit." The only thing sin respects is the sheer \_\_\_\_\_ of God the Holy Spirit. Mere knowledge, apart from the Spirit, cannot produce a God-pleasing lifestyle.


Paul speaks of the Spirit as being "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." He is very literally saying that the Spirit belongs to the life which is in Christ. The Spirit is inextricably tied to Divine life and this life is resident in the Person of Jesus Christ (John 6:57; 1 John 5:11-12). Paul’s main point here is that the Spirit who imparts life in Christ is the Superior Being who "has freed me from the law of sin and death."




In verse 3, the Greek phrase translated “for what the law could not do” may also be rendered the inability of the law, the lack of power of the law, or the weakness of the Law. As we have already observed Paul uses the Greek word for "law," in different contexts, with reference to many kinds of laws. A law may be merely a rule, regulation, stipulation, or standard.

We must keep in mind that the noun "law," as it is dependent upon human beings in the flesh for fulfillment, has a common denominator even though used differently. For example, what is said about the impotency of the law in this verse could be equally applied to the Mosaic Law or to the law of the mind (7:23, 25). In both cases these laws were impotent due to the weakness of the flesh, i.e., because sin indwells the flesh (7:17).

Why were the Mosaic Law and the law of the mind \_\_\_\_\_? Was it on account of an inherent problem in these laws themselves? Paul’s answer is definitely no; these laws are not intrinsically evil (7:7, 25), but holy, just, and good (7:12, 16, 21). The Mosaic Law was good for the accomplishment of God's purpose during the time for which it was given (Gal. 3:23-25). The law of the mind is used by Paul in this 7th chapter in conjunction with the Truth given to the Church; thus when used within this Church age, this dispensation of Grace, it is good. The problem is not in these laws but in those they seek to govern, in their totally depraved sinful nature (Eph. 2:3).



Paul pinpoints the reason the law is impotent, because it is "weak through the flesh." This means that in the past the law was powerless because it was infirm, sick, and void of strength through the flesh. In as much as the law depended upon the agency of the flesh for its fulfillment, and this agent was weak, sick, and infirm, it follows that instead of preventing sin, the law revealed sin (7:7, 13). Keep in mind that the reason God sent His Son in flesh that appeared to be identical to sinful flesh, but that was apart from sin, was “concerning sin,” respecting sin, or for sin.



It should be carefully noted that our Lord did not appear “in the likeness of sinful flesh” in the sense that He too was tainted by sin. The thought is rather that He did not appear in the likeness of unfallen Adam, with all of Adam’s glory and physical well-being. Rather, He appeared in the likeness of fallen Adam and his progeny, weakened as it had been by sin.

Having observed that God dispatched His Son into this sin-cursed world concerning and respecting the sin issue, we raise the question, "What did He do about it?" Paul’s answer is that "he condemned sin in the flesh." The context, which deals with the likeness of the Son's incarnate flesh to that of sinful men, makes it clear that he is saying that God condemned sin in the flesh of the Son.

His sovereign purpose involved the \_\_\_\_\_ of our sin, the result being that he was condemned unto death on the Cross (Acts 2:23; Rom. 5:6, 8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). God settled the issue of sin once and for all time through His Son assuming its penalty and dying on Calvary (Heb. 9:26, 28). As those who have been chosen in Christ we have died with Him to sin (Eph. 1 4; Rom. 6:2-6).


Verse 4 – That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

God had a given reason for condemning sin in the flesh of Jesus Christ on the Cross, "in order that the right acts of the law might be fulfilled in us." "that the righteousness of the Law" may also be rendered the just and equitable acts of the law. It refers to the just commands, stipulations, and exhortations of the law. As used here, is Paul referring to the Mosaic Law or to the law of the mind? The translated Greek, "righteousness of the law" could refer to either one of these laws. Since the present tense indicates that he is talking about a law which pertains to the present walk of believers in this Church age, this precludes the Mosaic Law, for he has already made it crystal clear that the Mosaic Law has no place in this age of Grace.

Since many have and continue to drag the Mosaic Law into the present dispensation of Grace, the most logical thing we can do is allow Paul's epistles to give us God's Word on this subject (1 Cor. 2:7-10; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3-4; Col. 1:25-27; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:15). As the evidence makes it obvious, there is no room for the Mosaic Law in either ceremonial or moral forming God's Church program, for it functions strictly on the basis of Grace.

- Believers are justified by faith apart from the Law (3:28).
- Believers are not under the Law but under Grace (6:14-15).
- Believers have been put to death to the Law so as to be joined to Christ (7:4).
- Believers have been freed from the Law (7:6).
- The end or consummation of the Law is Christ (10:4).
- Men are not justified by the works of the Law (Gal. 2:16; 3:11).
- Those led by the Spirit are not under the Law (Gal. 5:18).
- Christ has annulled the Law (Eph. 2:15).
- Paul had thrown off the so-called righteousness out of the Law (Phil. 3:9).
- The Law has no relevance for those justified and righteous in Christ (1 Tim. 1:9).

Also in dealing with the law of the mind Paul \_\_\_\_\_ it as the law of God in verse 7. He makes this same identification in 7:22 and 25.



As we have already observed the Mosaic Law is never referred to as the law of God in this epistle. In the light of the above evidence, on the one hand the law mentioned in this 4<sup>th</sup> verse cannot possibly be the Mosaic Law. On the other hand the contextual identification of this law with the law of God (v. 7) strongly suggests that it is the law of the mind (7:22, 25).

The thought here is that the right acts or stipulations of the law, the Truths revealed for regulating the Church, are to be "fulfilled in us, those not walking according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Summarizing, God having condemned our sin in the flesh of His Son on the Cross (Eph. 2:14) and having given to us the message of Grace for controlling the mind, we are to walk according to the Spirit and not complete the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.


The thought that Paul is expressing in this verse is that those who have their being according to the flesh \_\_\_\_\_ think on the things of the flesh, but those who have their being according to the Spirit continually think on the things of the Spirit.

In this verse Paul deals with the characteristics of two different groups:

- those according to the flesh
- those according to the Spirit. Who are those according to the flesh?

They are those who have their being, existence, and subsistence according to the flesh, i.e., in keeping with and conforming to the flesh.

Furthermore, the fact that they continually "think," set their minds on, and cogitate on the things which belong to the flesh categorizes them solely as flesh beings void of the Spirit (v. 9).



Paul says that those who have their being, existence, and subsistence "according to" in keeping with and conforming to the Spirit will continually "think," set their minds on, and cogitate on the things which belong to the Spirit. In contrast to the previous group, who are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), those who have their being and existence in the Spirit have a single mindset fixed upon the things which relate to the Spirit. They are interested in being controlled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), sharing the Word of God with others and giving thanks (Eph. 5:20- 21; Col. 3:16-17), and in having the Spirit produce His fruit in their lives (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 2:10).

6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The word "mind" conveys the idea of that which is thought, the frame of mind, mind-set, or that which is willed. Since the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person it is natural that He should have thoughts and a mind-set which focus on life and peace. It is strange, however, to hear Paul talking about the flesh as animated and alive, capable of thinking and willing that which is evil.

When we consider what he said in chapter 7, we really shouldn't be surprised, for sin dwells in the flesh and actively wages war against the law of the mind (vv. 17, 23). In fact, he describes this phenomenon as the old man, one who has an evil frame of mind (Eph. 4:22).

What does Paul mean by the statement that "to be carnally minded is death?" Apparently he is saying that all that the mind of the flesh \_\_\_\_\_ on, thinks, wills, and determines is in the sphere of death. It confirms that a person who has such a mind-set is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). This is the status of every descendant of Adam apart from Christ, he is living on spiritual death-row, and what his mind produces confirms it (1:32).

In contrast, let us look at the statement that "spiritually minded is life and peace. This passage makes it obvious that the word "mind" means the thoughts or thought patterns which belong to the Spirit. This passage also indicates that the mind of the Spirit is in perfect alignment with the mind of God. Paul specifically mentions two things which the mind of the Spirit produces, namely, life and peace. In verse 2 he says that "the law of the spirit is life in Christ Jesus" (cf. v. 10; 2 Cor. 3:6). The Holy Spirit is the One who changes forgiven sinners into new, living creations in Christ (John 3:5; Titus 3:5). Also, the Spirit imparts peace to those who are in the Body of Christ (Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:15).

7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Paul's thought here is that the mind of the flesh is death "because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. The reason that the mind of the flesh is death is because it is at "enmity," in a state of hostility and hatred against God. Disobedience to God, and the subsequent enmity, is that which brought about both spiritual and physical death to the human race (Gen. 3:3-6; Rom. 5:17).

Carefully observe, the mind of the flesh is death because of a faulty \_\_\_\_\_ with God, i.e., because of "enmity against God," hostility toward God, and man shaking his fist in God's sight.

Paul goes on to say that man in his enmity against God is "not subject to the law of God." This phrase basically means that the mind of the flesh is not lined up, arranged, and subordinated under the law of God. Of course the phrase "the law of God," since it is never used with reference to the Mosaic Law in this epistle, does not refer to that Law which was fulfilled at Calvary. On the other hand it does refer to stipulations revealed for this dispensation of Grace, Truth which is directed to the mind, for which reason it is also referred to as the law of the mind (7:23, 25). In First Corinthians 9:21 Paul is speaking of this same law when he says, "not being without the law of God but in the law of Christ." As we previously noted Paul has a strong antipathy against any effort to add the Law of Moses to this grace period of time (Phil. 3:2-9).

In this verse Paul affirms that the mind of the flesh is not subject nor arranged under the Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24). Since the mind of the flesh is an unsaved man this fully concurs with what he says in First Corinthians 1:18, namely, that "the word of the cross is to those perishing foolishness." The mind of the flesh, the sinner by nature, looks at God's Grace message for today as foolish and is not subject to it. Furthermore, with respect to the mind of the flesh, Paul says that "neither can it be" subject to the law of God, the message of God's Grace. This phrase may be rendered neither is it possible, neither does it have the ability, or neither does it have the dynamic or power to be subject. This is in full accord with First Corinthians 2:14.

8. So then they that are in flesh cannot please God.

In the preceding verse Paul said that it is not possible for the mind of the flesh to be subject to the law of God. In this verse he speaks of the individuals "being," having their being, and existing in the flesh. Those who are saved have their being and existence in the Spirit, but the unsaved, those referred to here, exist entirely in the sphere of the flesh. Jesus told Nicodemus that what "has been born out of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). The flesh is incapable of generating anything other than flesh, i.e., it cannot produce other than its own kind. The flesh cannot, by its falsely-called good works, elevate a sinner into the spiritual dimension.

Now let us look at the impotency of those who are in the flesh, they "are not able to please God." This means that they do not have the power, strength, and \_\_\_\_\_ to please God. They are not able to do anything acceptable to God or that would gain His favor. A person in the flesh, left to himself, is in an inescapable flesh-quagmire. There is absolutely nothing he can do in himself to cause God to react favorably toward him. As a sinner by nature he is dead to God and is incapable of the slightest response to God (Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Thess. 2:15). In view of the sinner's inability to please God, his total depravity, God has to take the initiative in saving him.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Paul's statement to the Romans, "but you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit," if it stood by itself, would suggest that he considered all those to whom he is writing as saved. The following statement, however, adds the condition "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Generally speaking, Paul assumes that those who were identified with a given church were saved, hence, he addressed them as saints (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). This was logical, for early believers were commonly persecuted which would have discouraged feigned believers.

Granting that it was not a popular thing to \_\_\_\_\_ together with believers, that it made one a potential candidate for persecution, Paul justifiably took for granted that those in the various local assemblies were saved. On the other hand, he never unequivocally vouched or attested the salvation of any person.

Since the relationship between God and a human being is a personal matter, in a verifiable sense known only to God and the person (1 John 5:13), Paul always left room for the if clause (cf. 1 Cor. 15:2; Col. 1:23). Paul did not know, he could not see, if indeed, if truly, if it was so that the Spirit of God was dwelling in all of them. The if question here revolves around the presence of the Holy Spirit in them. If the Spirit of God was dwelling in them, they would be classified as being in the Spirit. If the Spirit of God was not dwelling in them, they would be classified as being in the flesh. The line which divides between believers and unbelievers, according to this verse, is whether the Spirit is present or absent from a person (v. 4; 1 Cor. 3:16; Gal. 5:16-24).

10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

In this verse Paul postulates the consequences of Christ being in a person. First, on the one hand "the body is dead on account of sin." Second, on the other hand "the Spirit is life on account of righteousness." Observe, this postulation is conditional, for it depends upon Christ being in the person. It is interesting to note that in the preceding verse Paul designated the indwelling One as the "Spirit," the "Spirit of God," and the "Spirit of Christ." In this verse he refers to the same One as "Christ."

When we grant the fact that the Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, dwells in a person, then it is possible to conceive of Christ in- dwelling a person. In John 14:17, Jesus having declared that the Spirit is in believers, on the basis of this truth proceeds to say, "If anyone loves me and keeps my word, also my Father loves him, and we shall come to him and make our abode with Him" (v. 23). Posit the indwelling Holy Spirit and you have the \_\_\_\_\_ premise for the indwelling Christ.

As a result of Christ dwelling in a believer through the Spirit, Paul says that "the body is dead because of sin." Since sin dwells in the body, and the wages of sin is death, it logically follows that the body is dead (7:24). On the other hand, "the spirit is life because of righteousness." The thought here is that the human spirit is living, alive, and throbbing with Divine life. The life cycle is as follows: God the Father is living, God the Son lives because of the Father, and believers live because of the Son (John 6:57). Our spirits live because of righteousness, i.e., as a result of the righteousness which is "through the faithfulness of Christ, the out-of-God righteousness based upon faith" (Phil. 3:9). While we were sinners we were spiritually dead, but now that we are righteous in Christ, the one who dwells in us via the Spirit, our spirits are engulfed in the flow of Divine life.

11. But if the Spirit of him that raise up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you.

Again, what Paul says in this verse depends upon the fact that the Holy Spirit is \_\_\_\_\_ in us. He describes the Spirit as the "one who raised Jesus out from the dead." This indicates that God the Holy Spirit played an active role in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to John 10:17-18 God the Son was active in His own resurrection. The predominate number of references favor God the Father as the one who had the major role in the resurrection (6:4; Acts 13:30, 37; Gal. 1:1). Granting that the Spirit dwells in us, then "the one who raised Christ out from the dead will make alive also" our mortal bodies. This clause refers to God the Father as the one who will make alive our mortal bodies. This speaks of our dying, dead bodies - God is going to make them alive through the agency of His indwelling Spirit. The implication is that this does not refer to our resurrection bodies, which are changed and different (1 Cor. 15:42-49, 51-53; Phil. 3:21). The context implies that God is going to breathe life into these mortal bodies through the Spirit and use them as channels through which to accomplish his will. Paul is not talking about reforming the flesh in this verse, for it is hopelessly mired down in sin (8:7), but he is emphasizing God's provision through the Spirit to occupy and utilize our bodies for the glory of God (6:12; 2 Cor. 4:11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).

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

Therefore indicates that what Paul is about to say is a consequence of what he has just said. Brethren denotes a sense of personal warmth and comradeship with them. He doesn't say you are debtors, but "we are debtors," i.e., we as brethren have a joint debt, a mutual \_\_\_\_\_, and are all obligated not to live according to our old man.

Behind the scene in this verse we see the new man, the new creation in Christ, and the old man, the one resident in the flesh. The new man in Christ is not indebted and obligated to the flesh, the sphere in which sin energizes (7:5, 18, 25). Instead of being obligated to the flesh, to live according to it, Paul says that we should sense our obligation to love one another (Rom. 13:8).

13. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

In this verse Paul presents two options: (1) a life according to the flesh which results in death, and (2) living according to the Spirit which results in life. One's relationship with the Holy Spirit or non-relationship determines his eternal destiny.

The person whose life is \_\_\_\_\_ by the flesh is void of the Spirit, he does not belong to Christ, he is an unbeliever (v. 9). The link through which Satan dominates the unsaved world is the flesh (Eph. 2:3; 1 John 2:16-17). In Galatians 5:19-21 Paul gives us a brief list of the works of the flesh. Those who live in accord with the flesh thereby manifest that they are under Satan's control, and as such, will die. On the other hand, those who by means of the Spirit "put to death the practices of the body," they shall live. The "Spirit" is in the instrumental case, which indicates that He is the means by which the practices of the body are put to death. Observe that these "practices," actions, and deeds have their origin in the flesh and are expressed through the body. The Spirit does not endeavor to reform the flesh for it is hopeless (8:7), but He attacks the expression of the flesh through the body.

The person who is engaged in putting to death the practices of the flesh by means of the Spirit hereby manifests the fact that the Spirit dwells in him and that he belongs to Christ. He doesn't possess eternal life because the Spirit has been subduing the practices of his body, but this confirms the fact that he has a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:21; 6:23; 1 John 5:11-12). We need to be careful to distinguish between the signs that indicate one has life and the source of this life. The source is GRACE and the sign is a GODLY LIFESTYLE.

In the last half of this verse Paul finds the key to victory over the \_\_\_\_\_ and defeat that he wrestled with in chapter seven. Here the Holy Spirit of God is presented as the one who is able to make us victorious conquerors over every vestige of sin in our lives. He Himself, in conjunction with our spirit, flays, mutilates, kills, and puts to death the evil practices and deeds seeking expression through our bodies. Truly, at this point in Paul's dialogue we can say, Thanks be unto God who has given us the victory over sin by means of His Spirit!

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

“As many as” conveys the thought that everyone or all who are led by the Spirit are God's sons. In the light of what Paul has said in the previous context this is an excellent summary statement. Only those who have the indwelling Spirit belong to Christ (v. 9). God Himself makes our mortal bodies alive through His indwelling Spirit (v. 11). As the Spirit puts to death the practices of our bodies, evidence that we are spiritually living appears (v. 13).

This verse speaks of those who are \_\_\_\_\_ being led, guided, and conducted in their Christian walk by the Spirit. It refers to those who are being guided by the Spirit in accordance with the Word of God given to the Church (1 Cor. 2:10). This verse speaks of God's desire for all believers, that we might continuously be submitted to the leading of His Spirit according to the Truth given to us in His Word. This is God's ideal lifestyle for His sons, it marks us out as being His sons, but it is not the way we become sons.

Let us examine more closely the clause "they are the sons of God." Paul speaks of believers as sons some ten times in his epistles. According to Ephesians 1:5 God sovereignly, on the basis of His Grace, places those whom He has chosen in Christ in the position of sons (cf. Gal. 4:5). As those who occupy the exalted position of being sons of God, as those who are partakers of the Divine nature, we are to put to death the evil deeds of the body (2 Peter 1:4).

15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father.

Bondage is used by Paul to depict conditions under the Mosaic Law (Gal. 4:24; 5:1; Heb. 2:15). The Law of Moses operated on the principle that "the man who did it shall live by it" (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12). Those under the Law were incapable of keeping it due to the weakness of the flesh. Instead of the Law making men righteous it impressed upon their conscience the greatness of their sin (3:20; 7:5, 7-11). As the Law produced a sin-laden conscience in those who were in bondage under it, the obvious result was the fear of judgment (Heb. 2:15; 1 John 4:18).

Paul says that they did not receive the spirit and bondage of the Law, which left them in a state of fear, "but you received the spirit of adoption, in whom we cry, Abba, Father." To emphasize the contrast between the bondage and fear which existed under the Law and the new Grace sonship relation with the Father, Paul uses "but." Adoption literally means to place or set in the position of sons (Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:5-7). The phrase the "Spirit of adoption" suggests that the Spirit is involved in \_\_\_\_\_ about this adoption into God's Family (Eph. 2:19). As a result of this adoption the sons cry out, "Abba, Father!"

The Aramaic noun Abba means Father. Those who are made sons doubly recognize God as their Father.

There has been much misunderstanding about the meaning of the word "adoption" in this verse. In defining this word, three of the Bible Dictionaries misinterpret its meaning. One typical definition reads: "Adoption is an act by which a person takes a stranger into his family, acknowledges him as his child, and constitutes him heir of his estate .... In the New Testament, adoption denotes the act of God's grace by which, on being justified through faith, we are received into the family of God, and made heirs of the inheritance of heaven."


That this is the sense of our English word adoption no one will deny, but it is certainly not the meaning of the word here rendered "adoption." Perhaps no passage of Scripture will throw more light on the meaning of the Greek word here than Gal. 4:1-7 where, in one of his great historical statements, the Apostle says: "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. EVEN SO we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son then an heir of God, through Christ."

According to this passage, "adoption" is the "placing as a son" - a full-grown son. This is the definition of the Greek word "huiothesia," as given by Young, Robinson and others, while Thayer, referring to the adoption for which believers still wait, calls it "the consummate condition of the sons of God, which will render it evident that they are the sons of God."

The adoption of children, as we speak of it in English today, refers to the taking in of other people's children. This is not the meaning of the Greek "huiothesia," for according to Gal. 4:1-7 this "placing as sons" affected those already children.

This is not to imply, of course, that a stranger could not also be taken in and given a place as a full-grown son, but the point is that "adoption" here does not refer to mere \_\_\_\_\_ into the family, but to a declaration of full sonship, with all its rights and privileges - and responsibilities. In the life of the Hebrew boy there came a time, "appointed of the father," when "adoption" proceedings took place and the boy was declared to be the son and heir of the father. Before that time he had been a son, indeed, but "under tutors and governors."




He had been told what he must and must not, what he might and might not, do. In this he differed nothing from a servant. But finally the "time appointed" arrives! He is growing up now. It is assumed that he will no longer need overseers to keep him in check. There has come to be a natural understanding and cooperation between father and son. And so the "adoption" proceedings take place: a declaration, public and official, that the lad now enters into all the rights and privileges of full sonship.

Such is the meaning of the word adoption as used in the writings of Paul. How all this opens up the meaning of Rom. 8:15: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba [or] Father." True, we Gentile believers were once strangers and aliens, graciously taken into the family of God, but a careful examination of the above and related passages on "adoption" will clearly reveal that more than present-day adoption is meant.


The believer in this "dispensation of the grace of God" is not only saved from the penalty of sin, but is accepted as the Father's full grown son in Christ, God's beloved Son. He is given a position in Christ in the heavenlies at God's right hand, with free access to all the riches of the Father.

This is what so \_\_\_\_\_ the heart of Paul as he exclaimed: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children [Gr., huiiothesian] by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6).



But all the above does not militate against the idea that we are God's born children. Indeed, the opposite is the case, for the Apostle specifically states that as full grown sons we come into a deeper appreciation of the fact that we are God's children by birth:

"For ... ye have received ... the Spirit of adoption," he says, "whereby we cry Abba, Father," and adds:



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

The Holy Spirit is a Person, as is emphasized by the phrase "the Spirit himself" and He should always be referred to by the pronouns He, Him, who, and whom.

Now let us consider the statement that the Person of the Holy Spirit "bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." What makes it possible for the Spirit of God to communicate with us? To answer this question we must go back to God's original purpose in creation. He created man in His own image and likeness, as one with whom He could communicate, that He might have fellowship with man and that via man He might exercise dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). Beyond the animal world God gave man an eternal spirit (1 Cor. 2:11-12; Gal. 6:18). God is in spirit form, He is the Majestic Eternal Spirit (John 4:23-24; 2 Cor. 3:17).

The fact that man has been created in His image and likeness \_\_\_\_\_ that man have a spirit like Him. Thus we note that God the Holy Spirit has a Divinely created juncture via which He communicates with man, namely, the spirit of a man. According to this verse the Spirit "bears witness with our spirit." This literally means to bear witness with, to testify together with, or to add another witness. The thought is that as a result of having been placed in the position of sons we recognize God as our Father (v. 15), but beyond this, the Spirit adds His testimony, that we are children of God (1 John 3:1-2). Both our sovereign adoption and the witness of the Spirit confirm the fact that we are children in the family of God (9:8; 1 Cor. 4:14-15; Gal. 4:19; Eph.5:1).

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Paul is not vouching that those to whom he is writing are true children of God but if indeed they are, then it follows that they are "heirs." The word means an heir, a possessor, or one who receives an allotted portion. The fact that we are children of God gives us the privilege of inheriting what He has for us (Gal. 4:6-7). According to Titus 3:7 we have been made heirs of eternal life. According to Ephesians 1:18 Paul wants believers to know "what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Furthermore, Paul says that we are joint-heirs of Christ.

"Joint-heirs" means an heir with, a fellow-heir, or one who inherits-together-with. In as much as the name of Christ is in the genitive case, denoting possession, we have rendered it joint-heirs of Christ, i.e., who belong to Christ. In view of what follows it may be interpreted to mean fellow- heirs of what belongs to Christ.

This joint-heirship appears to be \_\_\_\_\_ on our suffering with Christ. The implication is that suffering with Christ is a prerequisite to being glorified with Him. The complete thought is that we are joint-heirs of that which is Christ's if we truly suffer with Him that we might be glorified with Him. The context makes it clear that we are joint-heirs of the glorification which belongs to Christ (Rom. 8:30; Phil. 3:19-20; Col. 1:27; 3:4). As "heirs of God" it may be that Paul has in mind inheriting this same glorification together with Christ. On the other hand, as we have pointed out, there is also a precedent for being heirs of eternal life.

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

The fact that this verse continues to emphasize the greatness of the glory which is to be revealed unto us is additional evidence favoring the view that the phrase "heirs of God" also refers to our glorification. According to Philippians 3:14, this is "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Glorification together with Christ is the ultimate object of all believers in this present Church age (Rom. 8:30). The Apostle John confirms the same truth, for he says, "we know that whenever he may be manifest we will be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

As Paul looked at the sufferings which he was going through for Christ, and as he contemplated the glory which is to be revealed unto all believers, he considered his sufferings insignificant in comparison. "Considered" means that he counted, reckoned, and regarded the things he was "suffering," his afflictions, and his evil treatment as not worthy to be compared with the future glory to be revealed unto him. The Greek word for "worthy" indicates that these sufferings were not of equal value, do not have the same weight, hence, are not worth enough to be compared with the believer's future glory.

Again Paul emphasizes the fact that glory is going to be revealed unto all believers. With respect to the time when this will take place, he says "which will be revealed in us."

It certainly portrays the idea of the imminent coming of Christ, that which precedes glorification with Christ (Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:4). It was not revealed to Paul nor any other New Testament writers when Jesus Christ would come (cf. Matt. 24:36 regarding His kingdom coming), however, Paul believed that He could return at \_\_\_\_\_ time (13:11-12; Heb. 10:25).

19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

"Earnest expectation" means to watch for with the head stretched out or to eagerly hope and anticipate the time when the sons of God will be revealed. This earnest expectation belongs to creation, i.e., the creation itself "looks for," expects, anticipates, and waits for the great event Paul has been speaking about. This event, the next thing to take place on the prophetic horizon, is the "revelation," uncovering, disclosing, and manifesting of the sons of God. This manifestation of the sons of God is to be \_\_\_\_\_ with their glorification (v. 18; 1 Peter 4:13).

20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

As a result of the Adamic fall the creation was subjected to vanity (Gen. 3:17- 19; 5:29; Eccl. 1:2). The word translated "vanity" has many potential meanings, but in this passage is feasibly translated emptiness, uselessness, and futility. The implication is that the curse greatly devastated that which God has originally created. We logically assume that the original earth was highly productive and free from useless and harmful weeds which rape the cursed ground (Matt. 13:24-30).

Now let us examine what was entailed in the \_\_\_\_\_ of creation to vanity. Subject means that at a given point in time, soon after Adam and Eve sinned, God subjected creation to a state of emptiness and futility. He did this for Adam's sake, i.e., as partial punishment for his rebellion (Gen. 3:17). As for creation, it did not "willingly" or voluntarily become subjected to vanity. It had no choice in the matter, but was a victim of Adam's rebellion against the Creator. The creation had nothing to say about its subjection, but was subjected by the sovereign Creator of the universe. This subjection was "based on" or on the basis of hope. Originally, a man in harmony with his Maker was placed in an environment concomitant with his perfect status. Likewise, after having sinned, man was out of harmony with his maker; he was a rebel, and God provided for him an environment associated with his depraved nature. In as much as God gave man the hope of redemption from his sinful plight (Gen. 3:15; Acts 2:23), He also subjected his environment to vanity that it might have the hope of deliverance. We have two depraved entities, man and creation, reinforcing the hope of each other as they look forward to a simultaneous redemption.

21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

We have already observed that those out of Adam's lineage who have believed, who are sons and children of God, are looking forward to being glorified together with Christ (vv. 15-17). We note also that creation itself, on the basis of hope, "will be freed from the bondage of corruption unto the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

Shall be delivered is in the future tense and passive voice which means that in God's appointed time in the future He will set free, liberate, and unfetter creation from the bondage of corruption to which He subjected it subsequent to Adam's sin. The phrase "the bondage of corruption means the slavish, servile, and abject conditions which accompany the corruption and ruin to which creation was subjected. This phrase affords us additional information on the sad plight of creation today as compared to its original state.

When God's due time arrives, creation will be freed "unto the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

When God frees creation from the condition to which He subjected it, the end or object will be unto a state wherein the freedom, liberty, and unrestrictedness of the glory of the children of God reigns. This context depicts the liberation of the creation as belonging to the glory, i.e., associated with the glory of the children of God. This means, as we have already affirmed, that the glorification of the sons of God and the liberation of creation will take place simultaneously.

22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Paul uses the Greek verb for "know" which implies that he is referring to \_\_\_\_\_ given to him rather than that gained through experience. We assume that he is speaking of knowledge which was given to him via Divine revelation (Gal. 1:12). According to this knowledge "all the creation," every aspect of it, the whole, "groans-with" and sighs-with as well as "travails-with" and is in pain-with. As used in this verse, these two compound verbs may refer to: (1) that there is groaning and travailing going on within the whole of creation itself, i.e., that this is speaking of an imminent groaning and travailing; (2) on the other hand, it could be referring to the whole of creation groaning and travailing together with believers in their imperfect prior-to-glorification state.

This process of creation groaning-with and travailing-with has continued from the time creation was cursed "until the present," which literally means until the now. We need to acknowledge that creation will be subject to vanity during the span of time from the curse (Gen. 3:17-19) to the Millennial Kingdom (Acts 3:19-21). This present age of Grace, the last age before the establishment of the Millennium, is a time when Satan is referred to as the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4). This is a time when the results of the Adamic Fall hang heavy upon all men leaving them totally depraved in a cursed environment. In the midst of misery and wars, there is hope for those who are identified with Jesus Christ through faith in His substitutionary death on Calvary's Cross.

23. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Paul's emphasis in the preceding four verses has been on the condition of creation as a result of the curse. In this verse he says that not only creation is groaning as a result of the curse, but even we who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan as we wait for our adoption.

What does Paul have in mind when he speaks about those who have the first fruits of the Spirit? The Greek word translated "first fruits" literally means from the first, hence, the first fruits, first portion, or the first thing in a chain of events. The first thing the Holy Spirit does, His first fruit, is to seal believers, to guarantee their inheritance, and this is effective unto the day of redemption (Eph.1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5).

Even we who belong to Jesus Christ groan; those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit, for "we ourselves in ourselves groan." If we reflect back on what Paul had to say in the seventh chapter, as he gave us a glimpse into the struggle between his two natures, we can better understand why even believers groan. If it wasn't for the Holy Spirit we would be utterly defeated. Only by putting to death the practices of the body, by means of the Spirit, are we able to live for Christ. This groaning, on our part, takes place while we are "waiting" to be glorified together with Christ (v. 17). This is also referred to as the redemption of our body, a time when it will be redeemed to conform to Christ's body (Phil. 3:20-21).

24. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

The concept of hope was introduced in verse 20. There Paul said that creation was subjected to vanity on the basis of hope. The thought is that creation, in a vain state of subjection, would, on the basis of hope, be looking forward to a time when it would be freed. In the light of the grammatical construction of this verse it is most accurately translated "in hope," the thought being in the sphere of hope. Confining what is being said here to the preceding context, Paul is saying that as saved ones we are surrounded with the hope of the "glory to be revealed unto us" (v. 18).

Now let us look at the statement that in hope "we were saved." This means that we were saved at a given point in the past. There would have been the prevenient calling of the Holy Spirit toward salvation, but the act of salvation was instantaneous. The use of the passive voice indicates that "we who were saved" were passive. As those who were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3) we could not make even the slightest movement toward God. According to the passive voice an outside agent does the acting, which in this case was God. He both instilled in us saving faith (cf. Rom. 10:17) and regenerated us by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-6). Since salvation is by Grace, totally the work of God, it follows that it is perfect and eternal. Having briefly dealt with the verb "saved," due to misunderstanding surrounding it, now let us observe that "hope that is being seen is not hope." Paul's point is that hope that is continually being seen, being looked at, and being observed by a person is not hope to that person. More specifically, if we see ourselves in our redeemed glorified bodies, then the hope of obtaining this position is no longer hope. If our hope depends upon seeing something which is unseen, then when the unseen is seen the hope is obliterated and nonexistent.

Finally, Paul raises the question, "for who hopes for that which he sees?" To get the right perspective on this verse we need to grasp the basic meaning of the Greek word for "hope." The best English equivalents for this verb are to hope, to look for, or to expect. By substituting these last two equivalents for the word hope in Paul's question, it reads, "for who looks for that which he sees?" or "for who expects that which he sees?" The insertion of these equivalents for hope make it very obvious - no one looks for or expects that which he sees. If one sees glorification with Christ as an accomplished fact, he will no longer hope or look for it. This would be contrary to the principle of the Gospel, namely, that we were saved in the \_\_\_\_\_ of hope.

25. But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Having established the fact that we only hope for, expect, and look for that which is not yet seen, then it follows that "through patient endurance we eagerly wait for it." This means to remain under, hence, to endure, to be steadfast, and patient. The thought is that through patient endurance, a positive discipline in itself, we eagerly wait for the fulfillment of the promise in this context (vv. 17-23). Paul's thought is that we are to eagerly expect and wait for the time when we will be glorified together with Christ (v. 17). Other passages which help us better understand the meaning of this are: 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; and Heb. 9:28.