

Our State of Theology – 9g(5)

The Holy Spirit: The Fruit of the Spirit – Our Witness of Salvation

Romans 8:15–17 (NIV84)

¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship (*adoption*). And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

- James Denney, *Scottish Free Church theologian*: “It was not the spirit proper to slaves, leading them again to shrink from God in fear as they had done when under the law of sin and death, but a Spirit of adoption, a Spirit proper to those who were being translated from the servile to the filial relation to God.”¹
- Both the unregenerate and the regenerated have a relationship with God.

Unregenerate: a servile relationship as slaves who shrink from God in fear, because they are under the law of sin and death. The law of sin and death is a law whereby the slave suffers the consequences of death due to not keeping the law. A punishment meted out by God.

Regenerate: a filial (family-type) relationship as children who, in love, run to Abba, Father God. Under the law of the Spirit of life, who has made them part of a family who does not fear being unable to keep the law, because Jesus kept the law and received upon Himself the punishment meted out by God that was due us.

- If we have the (Holy) Spirit within us, we no longer have the spirit of bondage. We are no longer shaking and quaking in servile fear before the Lord God. We now have the *spirit of adoption*.²

The Spirit of God we have received is not a spirit of fear but the Spirit who makes us God’s sons.³

- Adoption is related to regeneration, or the new birth, but they are not the same thing.

Regeneration has to do with our receiving a new life or *new nature*.

Adoption has to do with our receiving a new *status*.

Adoption signified being granted the full rights and privileges of sonship in a family to which one does

not belong by nature.⁴

- The Holy Spirit is called “*the Spirit of adoption*,” not because he is the agent of adoption but because it is he who creates in the children of God the filial love and confidence by which they are able to cry, “Abba, Father” and exercise the rights and privileges of God’s children.⁵

The Spirit of adoption causes us to cry out, “Abba, Father.”

Abba was the address of small children to their fathers.⁶

- J. I. Packer: “What is a Christian? The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God for his Father.”

We are designed to live in a family. Our highest privilege and deepest need is to experience the holy God as our loving Father, to approach him without fear and to be assured of his fatherly care and concern.⁷

- This is speaking of a family relationship with God.

Sin abducts, God adopts.

Sin makes slaves, God makes children.

Sin provokes fear, the Spirit evokes trust.

Sin foments rebellion and hostility, the Spirit leads believers to appeal to God in the most intimate and urgent cry, “Abba, Father.”

The paradox of grace is that those who deserve death are granted life.⁸

- Grace cancels condemnation; indeed grace short-circuits the whole downward spiral of law, sin, and death because grace is *unconditional*, that is, it is bestowed not on the basis of human merit, but on the basis of God’s love.⁹

^{8:16}The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 838, 840.

⁵ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 296.

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 840, 842.

⁷ Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*, Expanded edition. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect, 2007), 115.

⁸ James R. Edwards, *Romans*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 207.

⁹ James R. Edwards, *Romans*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 207–208.

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 134.

² R. C. Sproul, *Romans*, St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 263.

³ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 261.

- **Romans 8:16 (NKJV)**

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

^{8:17}Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- What does The Spirit Himself *bears witness with our spirit* mean?
- Our crying ‘Abba, Father’ rests upon the fact that no less an authority than God Himself in His Spirit has assured us—and continues to assure us—that we are His children.

The knowledge that we are God’s children is something which we cannot impart to ourselves: it has to be given to us from outside and beyond ourselves—from God.

- The Holy Spirit enables us to “believe in Jesus Christ, through whom alone we may rightly call God ‘Father’.”¹⁰

The believer’s assurance of salvation is based on the inner witness of the Spirit.

- In the Bible we see that God has one child, the *monogenēs*, the only begotten, even Jesus Christ. All the rest of his children are not naturally born children; they are adopted. We cannot get into the family of God by biological birth. The only way we can enter in is if God adopts us, and the only way we are adopted is if we are united by the Holy Spirit to the Son of God, Jesus Christ.¹¹

Ephesians 2:1–9 (NIV84)

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with

him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

- There is absolutely no mention of feelings or emotions mentioned in these verses.
- Our salvation is objective; it is not subjected to whether we feel saved or forgiven. It is all completed by God and God alone.
- Salvation is not accomplished by any works, which also includes psyching ourselves up so that we positively believe that we are saved.

Ephesians 1:11–14 (NIV84)

¹¹In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

¹²in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit [*the Holy Spirit of promise*, NKJV],

¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13–14 (NET 2nd ed.)

¹³And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit,

¹⁴who is the down payment (*initial installment*) of our inheritance, until the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of his glory.

- The word “seal,” *sphragizō* [4972], means “to make something secure,” and the seal itself denotes ownership, approval, or closure.¹²
- An owner seals his property with his signet to mark it as his; if at a later time he comes to claim it and his right to it is questioned, his seal is sufficient evidence and puts an end to such questioning.

Believers are endowed with the Spirit as the token

¹⁰ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 402, 403.

¹¹ R. C. Sproul, *Romans*, St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 263.

¹² Charles R. Swindoll, *Galatians, Ephesians*, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2015), 171.

The Holy Spirit: The Fruit of the Spirit – Our Witness of Salvation pledge in sealing the believer with the Holy Spirit, indicating that he guarantees the fulfillment of all the things involved in the inheritance purchased by Christ through his work in procuring salvation.¹⁸

- The Spirit, in other words, is God's first installment on our salvation and the guarantee that the full future inheritance will be delivered.

The NIV correctly translates 1:14 so that the possession is seen as God's possession of his people, not their possession of salvation.¹⁹

God is making the down payment of the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing that we will be purchased by Him for His ownership of us. We do not make any payment in this transaction.

Malachi 3:17 (NIV84)

¹⁷"They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him.

- We need a deep sense of God's whole story: his activity in Israel, especially his foundational work in Christ, and his comforting promise for the future.

Christians are people who live in the present, founded on the past, and pulled by the future.

The future is not merely "out there"; it is already being experienced.

The ultimate promises of God are already being enjoyed in the present, even though their completion is still to come. This "already-not yet" understanding of time must dominate Christian living.

- The most important aspect of this "already-not yet" thinking has to do with the Holy Spirit.

Through the [Holy] Spirit, Christians already now enjoy the privileges of life with God. The [Holy] Spirit guarantees what is still future, when life with God is brought to fulfillment in future salvation.²⁰

- *Doxological paraphrase of Ephesians 1:3–14:*
- How marvelous God is! His Spirit has provided everything needed for life. Every good thing has been made available in Christ. We praise such a God. Right from the first God has been busy devising a way

that they belong to God.¹³

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer authenticates God's ownership and marks the person as a Christian.¹⁴

- The moment we come to faith the sealing occurs.

The thought is not that we must believe a while, and that some time later in the course of our believing the Spirit is bestowed.¹⁵

- The word for *sealing* is used only a very few times in the New Testament. The concept is of an indelible mark, representing a promise.

The closest thing to this in the ancient world would be whenever a king wanted to authenticate a decree and marked it with a wax impression from his signet ring.

This signet ring wax impression, in the Greek world, was called a *throgos*, a seal, and it represented and guaranteed that what had been promised would take place.

- Christians debate whether it is possible for a Christian to lose his salvation. I believe that if we were left to ourselves then it would not only be possible for us to lose our salvation, but I wonder if it would be possible for anybody to persevere in salvation.¹⁶
- As a result of faith, people in Christ are sealed with the Holy Spirit. [This sealing with the Holy Spirit is accomplished at conversion], not baptism or a second experience after conversion.

At conversion, all believers receive the Spirit as both a "seal" and a "deposit" guaranteeing future life with God.¹⁷

- *Down payment:* Greek, *arrabon*, used by the Septuagint in these verses, indicated a pledge/down payment.

The *arrabon* in classical and later Greek was used as a legal and commercial technical term to indicate earnest or pledge money, the first installment securing the claim on the object in question.

Arrabon in Ephesians 1:14 highlights God's

¹³ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: A Verse-by-Verse Exposition*, An Open Your Bible Project (Bath, UK: Creative Communications, 2012), 32.

¹⁴ Harry Uprichard, *A Study Commentary on Ephesians*, EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England; Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2004), 59.

¹⁵ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Columbus, O.: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 382.

¹⁶ R. C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 32.

¹⁷ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 54.

¹⁸ W. Harold Mare, *New Testament Background Commentary: A New Dictionary of Words, Phrases and Situations in Bible Order* (Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2004), 305.

¹⁹ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 54–55.

²⁰ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 60.

Numbers 12:1–2 (NET 2nd ed.)

¹Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married (for he had married an Ethiopian woman).

²They said, “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has he not also spoken through us?” **And the LORD heard it.**

- The Holy Spirit is Himself the seal that God has placed in us.
- He is the seal, indicating that the transaction whereby the Son of God paid the penalty of human sin at the Cross is a finished transaction, and that **God owns us as His property by right of purchase.**
- The Holy Spirit is the seal God places upon the saints which guarantees all this.²⁴

Galatians 3:23–4:7 (ESV)

²³Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.

²⁴So then, **the law was our guardian until Christ came,** in order that we might be justified by faith.

- *Guardian* = *paidagōgos* = often used for a person who guided or directed others. More specifically, the term was used in both Greek and Roman societies for **slaves who were entrusted with the responsibility of moral and educational upbringing of young boys.**²⁵

²⁵**But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,**

²⁶**for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God,** through faith.

²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

¹I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,

²but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

³In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we

to draw us home to himself so that we may live with him and for him. Through Jesus Christ he has made us family. As a result we owe God praise for the way he freely gave himself to us in Christ. In Christ's death God's abundant care for us is known; God gave himself for us to bring us back and make us his people. What lavish love he has for us! We honor you, God. In his unfathomable wisdom God has made known his plan and desire to bring all things together in Christ. This includes everything in our world and everything in God's world. Amazingly God's plan includes us and gives us a share in what he is doing. For this we owe God praise for the hope that is ours in Christ. When we heard about the truth from God and believed the good news about his plan, God marked us as his own by giving us his Spirit. The Spirit's dwelling in us is a pledge from God that he will complete his plan and that one day we will truly live with God. For this we owe God praise. Our God, we do worship you.²¹

Ephesians 4:25–32 (NIV84)

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

²⁶“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold.

²⁸He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

³⁰And do not grieve the **Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed** for the day of redemption.

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

- *Grieve* = *λυπέω* *lupéō* = to cause severe mental or emotional distress, *vex, irritate, offend, insult.*²²

Foul talk of every kind is not to be thought of lightly, as a breath that the wind takes away, but **it is heard by the Holy Spirit of God,** who feels deeply grieved and insulted over such behavior.²³

²¹ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 69.

²² William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 604.

²³ Paul E. Kretzmann, *The Popular Commentary of the Bible: The New Testament*, vol. 2, The Popular Commentary of the Bible (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1921), 282.

²⁴ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 116–117.

²⁵ Douglas Mangum and Derek R. Brown, *Galatians*, Lexham Research Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Ga 3:1–4:7.

might receive adoption as sons.

⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

- Even the Elect are not regenerated until they are redeemed by Jesus Christ.
- The Elect have been chosen before the foundation of the world, before creation, before they were even born.

Their redemption did not come to fruition when they were born physically, it came to fruition, when they were born again, or born spiritually.

- When we were born again, God sent the Holy Spirit in our hearts by Whom, we call out, “Abba, Father!”

God is not “the man upstairs.” We don’t refer to Him as our spiritual “old man.”

The born-again person, naturally relates intimately to God as *Abba*, Father and not some distant far-away deity, whom we barely know.

2 Corinthians 1:21–22 (NIV84)

²¹Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,

²²set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Hebrews 10:15–25 (NIV84)

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

¹⁶“This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”

¹⁷Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”

¹⁸And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,

²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- **The Holy Spirit also witnesses** to the fact that under the New Covenant, sins would be effectively dealt with once and for all. He **witnesses** to it through the OT Scriptures.
- In OT times the people were kept at a distance; now in Christ we are brought near through **the blood** of His cross. Therefore we are encouraged to draw near.

The common people during the Jewish economy were barred from the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place; only the priests could enter the first room, and only the High Priest could enter the second.

Now that is all changed! God has no special place where only a special caste of men may approach Him.

Instead, all believers may come into His presence by faith at any time and from any place on earth.²⁶

- The nearness of Christ’s return makes our encouragement of one another and our gathering together all the more urgent and all the more significant. As time moves toward the Day of the Lord, [God] expects the church to grow in faithful commitment. No one knows when that day will come, but God’s Word confirms that the day is imminent. **We must remain ready.**²⁷

²⁶ William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 2190.

²⁷ R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), Heb 10:23–25.