

Sons of God (Rom 8:14-17)

- I. Rom 8:14-17- Begins a new subsection
 - A) Overall context- For this section (from 5:1-8:39) is the assurance of salvation, or the assurance of the preservation and perseverance of the saints
 - 1. The most important element in interpretation is always the context
 - 2. Therefore the sub-section we begin here must also be about assurance
 - i. Paul started this section in ch 5 by making a statement about the preservation of the saints and then has worked it out in example after example
 - a) He started in 5:12 with the teaching on “union with Christ”
 - 1) Rom 1:1-15- Introduction
 - 2) Rom 1:16-4:25- Justification of the guilty by faith
 - 3) Rom 5:1-8:39- Assurance of the true believer
 - (a) Rom 6:1-7:25- Objections answered
 - 4) Rom 9:1-11:36- The subject of the Israelite
 - 5) Rom 12:1-15:13- Application
 - B) Ch 8 context- After dealing with objections, Paul returned to his theme of assurance:
 - 1. Rom 8:1- The saint is no condemned, but assured of final salvation:
 - i. Rom 8:2-4- Because we are delivered from the law and joined unto Christ by the Spirit
 - ii. Rom 8:5-11- Because the Spirit now indwells us and is sanctifying us
 - a) Paul ends this sub-section by including the assurance of the salvation of the body
 - iii. Rom 8:12-13- Practical exhortation due to these facts
 - C) Rom 8:14-17- “For”
 - 1. This is Paul’s favorite term and connects what follows with what went before
 - 2. Paul assures the person who is mortifying the deeds of the body that they are being led by the Spirit to do so, and if led by the Spirit, assured of salvation, as everyone led of the Spirit is a “son of God”
 - i. This begins the context of this sub-section- Assurance do to son-ship
 - a) Paul’s method here again proves that we have gotten the context correct: assurance of salvation
 - 1) The common teaching that this section is about sanctification misses the mark

- 2) Sanctification does enter in here in Rom 8, but only as another part of the assurance of the believer
 - (a) Sanctification is a means to an end, and never the end itself
 - (b) Sanctification is always preparing us for glory as sons of God
 - (1) Glorification- God's end game (Rom 5:2)
 - (2) Rom 8:30- Skips from justification to glorification
- 3) Our assurance must always begin with God and what He has planned and is doing
 - (a) We stumble and doubt when we are overly subjective and begin with self

II. Rom 8:14-17- Overview of Paul's points:

A) Proves that all men are not sons of God

1. Disproves the popular teaching of the "universal fatherhood of God" and the "universal brotherhood of men"
 - i. Acts 17:28 is often misused in the teaching
2. Compare John 1:12-13, 3:16-18, 8:44, 17:9, Eph 2:1-3

B) Proves only true Christians are sons of God

1. Paul is not separating "sons" (v.14) from "children" (v.16)
 - i. Beware of the "son-ship edification" heresy
 - a) Gal 4:1-7 is often misused in this teaching
 - 1) But the context is not 2 classes of Christians, but rather the awareness of the N/T saint compared with the O/T saint, also with the babe in Christ with the later more mature version of the same person
 - 2) Thus the "Abba Father" (which the O/T saints never said)
 - (a) The Christian is not simply forgiven, but made a son of God in regeneration
 - (b) There are not 2 distinct positions or class with correlating inheritance

C) Explains what son-ship means

1. We begin as sons of Adam (Psa 51:5)
 - i. Christ alone is and always will be the "only begotten Son of God"
2. It is by adoption that we become children of God
 - i. Adoption- Is a legal action where a person not kin by natural birth becomes a member of the family and an heir
 - ii. Adoption is an act by a father and not by a son
 - a) Eph 1:3-6- Because it is God the Father Who does it, it is irreversible and eternal
 - iii. Adoption and justification are only to be separated for understanding, but they are so closely linked as to be immediate and connected

- iv. Adoption includes a change in nature
 - a) 2 Pet 1:4- Partake of divine nature
 - b) 1 John 3:9 & 5:18
- D) How to be certain of our son-ship
 - 1. Being led by the Spirit
 - 2. Crying Abba Father
 - 3. Internal witness of Spirit in these things
 - 4. Like treatment in this world
- E) Results of that son-ship
 - 1. The above 4 points could be put here as well
 - 2. Joint heirs with Christ
 - 3. Assurance of glory!
- III. Our assurance is not limited to son-ship/adoption
 - A) The Spirit of God uses many examples to teach this union with Christ in the scriptures:
 - 1. Eph 5:24-32- Married to Christ
 - 2. 1 Cor 12- The body of Christ
 - 3. 1 Cor 6- The temple of Christ
 - 4. John 15- The Vine and the branches
 - 5. Eph 2- The household of God
 - 6. Rom 11- Grafted into Christ