The Call of "Abba (to) the Father":
A Study of Romans 8:15

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Abstract

Typically, the proponent of the Doctrine of Adoption translates "pneuma doulesias" into "the spirit of slavery" and "pneuma huiothesias" into "the Spirit of adoption." This interpretive work reread Romans 8:15 to show that the two occurrences of "pneuma" refer to the human spirit's states of being. The old Adamic beings have the pneuma doulesias, and the new Christic beings have received the pneuma huiothesias that enable them to participate in spiritual communion. Moreover, adding "to" to the scream, "Abba [to] the Father," offers further context. This new reading of the said verse negates the Doctrine of Adoption.

Keywords: *pneuma doulesias*, *pneuma huiothesias*, the human spirit, the Spirit of adoption, *Abba* the Father, communion, Tim J.R. Trumper.

Introduction

In his exposition on adoption, Tim J.R. Trumper teaches that humans have spirits.[1] Still, believers receive the Spirit of adoption to become the sons of God. But he does not explain how the somatic Adamic humans can have active spirits for participating in communion with the Spirit while they also can fall. According to Trumper,

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[1] "He witnesses with their spirits, not to them." Tim J.R. Trumper, "A Fresh Exposition of Adoption: I. An Outline," *SBET* 23 (2005): I:76.

Ever since the Fall, men and women have been 'sons of disobedience,' 'children of wrath,' inhabitants of the household of the living dead, and slaves to the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:1-3).[2]

He adds, "The Spirit witnesses supernaturally and personally with their spirits (*summarturei*) that they are authentic children of God (*tekna theou*, Rom. 8:16)."[3] It implies that there are in-authentic children of God who do not receive the Holy Spirit. Trumper refuses to relate *huiothesia* with extra-Pauline NT texts, such as John 1:12.

The exposition of adoption must reflect the actual language of the New Testament (NT), especially the uniqueness of Paul's term (huiothesia), from which the adoption model derives its name (Rom. 8:15- 16, 22-23; 9:4; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:4-5). In keeping with this, I have refused to draw on extra-Pauline NT texts, including John 1:12.[4]

Trumper hesitates to translate *huiothesia* into "sonship" in English or "*Kindschaft*" in German.[5] He argues, "Even if *huiothesia* meant 'sonship' rather than 'adoption,' the most appropriate translation of *huiothesia* would be 'sonship by adoption.'" [6] "Paul made use of the idea of adoption into the

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[2] Tim J.R. Trumper, *SBET* 23 (2005): I:67.

[3] Tim J.R. Trumper, *SBET* 23 (2005): I:75-6.

[4] Tim J.R. Trumper, *SBET* 23 (2005): I:61.

[5] *Cf.*, "The word translated 'adoption' (*huiothesia*) is, in signification, quite equivalent to sonship. 'The spirit of adoption' is the spirit with which dutiful children regard their father, and the employments he is pleased to assign to them — a spirit of love and confidence, producing tranquillity of mind, and cheerful obedience and submission." John Brown, *Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (NY: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1857), 214.

[6] Tim J.R. Trumper, "The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realization I. The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage." *SBET* 14 (1996), 133

family of God, resulting in a new status accompanied by freedom from slavery."[7] Early in his exposition, he writes, "Paul's *huiothesia* echoes adoption in Graeco-Roman world, meaning 'the placing of a son.'"[8] I see there are contradictions in the definitions in his article. They are tangible when the readers know that "placing of a son" has nothing to do with "*adoptio*," even during the Claudius era. How can "placing of a son" is "adoption into the family of God resulting in a new status?" He admits that *huiothesia* suggests a legal reference but is relational in its purview.[9] Even when Trumper promotes "adoption," he renders,

> *My immediate concern has been to provide a reliable biblical basis on which to pose the theological questions. It is to be hoped that, one day, these will be answered. Once they are, we shall have to hand what John Kennedy long ago (1869) described as 'awanting'; namely, 'a clear definition of adoption, and a just description of its effects, on the relation between believers and God'.*[10]

What if he finds the definition of adoption is not *huiothesia*, or *vice versa*? He knows Martin Luther's opinion on *huiothesia* as the placing of a son, but he addresses a plea for the realization of adoption. I sense that Trumper sits on the fence.

What is adoption? J. M. Boice describes how it works,

> *Adoption is the procedure by which a person is taken from one family (or no family) and placed in another. In this context, it refers to removing a*

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[7] Tim J.R. Trumper, "The Metaphorical." *SBET* 14 (1996), 133

[8] Tim J.R. Trumper, *SBET* 23 (2005): I:64-5.

[9] Tim J.R. Trumper, *SBET* 23 (2005): I:79.

[10] Tim J.R. Trumper, *SBET* 23 (2005): I:79-80.

person from the family of Adam (or Satan) and placing him or her in the family of God. [11]

John Murray also defines adoption,

> *Adoption is an act of God's grace distinct from and additional to the other acts of grace involved in the application of redemption. … Adoption is, like justification, is a judicial act. … Adoption, as the term clearly implies, is an act of* transfer from an alien family *into the family of God himself. This is surely the apex of grace and privilege. … Adoption is concerned with the fatherhood of God in relation to men.*[12]

What if Pauline's *huiothesia* is neither adoption nor sonship? The discussion of *huiothesia* against adoption is complex, for the advocates of adoption use the words interchangeably and treated as being synonymous, make the words become difficult to distinguish as if they were equivalent. The words employed by the proponents and opponents, the phrases, Bible verses, and pericopes they refer to, signify different meanings to each group. Terms like "sons" and "children" have other significance to each camp, especially the phrase "to become children of God." Unlike Trumper, I maintain it is unjustifiable to read "'sons of disobedience,' 'children of wrath,' inhabitants of the household of the living dead," from Eph. 2:1-3. The verses refer to God's created children who inhabit God's created cosmos but are ill-disciplined and live *kata sarka*.

Unlike Trumper, I read Eph. 2:1-5 occur in the *ktisis* (creation).[13] This creation is the shared house of all God's

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[11] J.M. Boice, *Romans Volume 2: The Reign of Grace* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2005), 2:838-40.

[12] John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 132-4. Emphasis added.

[13] *See*, footnote 57 of Tim J.R. Trumper, *SBET* 23 (2005): I:76.

Adamic children. They have many gods or do not have any, but it does not change the fact that there is only one Creator. The cosmos, and everything in it, is under the economy of the Creator.[14] Why should everyone in this created cosmos be accountable to this Creator if he is not the father of all? Why does a tribal father have the authority to punish children of other families or no family?[15] The Christian Church is a fellowship in the *oikoumene.* The Church is like a banquet, offering bread and wine of life for everyone, the elixir of immortality.[16] The descendants of the literary Adam, those who live under the Law and those under *ta stoicheia,* are God's *nepioi* (infants) who are the object of salvation. Due to this created cosmos being under God's economy, the begotten *Huios* of God visits this house to redeem these infants. The whole process of creation occurs in this temporal *ktisis* from the first six days to Parousia. God is nurturing all created beings. The life of the unbelievers during temporality is a blessing already caused by God's love. The authority of a *pater* is within his own family only. An adoption requires two families. Any father involved in a "divine adoption" is a tribal father with limited power within his jurisdiction. A father or a mother will seek and protect *their* lost children.[17] Children of other families are under others' economy. A god who can create does not adopt.

The first section of the epistle to the Ephesians (1:3–14) gives an overview of God's plan for salvation; Paul mentioned *huiothesia* in v.5. In Romans 8:15, Paul explained the process of *huiothesia* to individuals; this, I think can disclose part of the context. Thus, in this work, I focus on Rom. 8:15. It is one of the bases from where the advocates of adoption launch their

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[14] "As there is one God, so there is but one Word and one Spirit, who are always present with the one human race throughout the various events which constitute the one economy of God." John Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011), 40. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198270003.001.0001

[15] *Cf.*, 1Pet. 4:17-18 "The house of God" symbolizes the Church.

[16] *Cf.* Matthew 22:10.

[17] *Cf.* The Parable of the Lost Sheep in Matthew 18:12-14 and Luke 15:1-7.

doctrine. I provide an alternative translation of this verse to show that it is not about adoption. Through this exegetical work, I argue that the Triune God saves humans by, at first, transforming humans' spirits, qualifying them to scream "*Abba*" to the Father. It is not the giving of the *Spirit* of adoption, implying that there is no such thing as adoption in this verse. In this biblical and theological work of *corpus Paulinum*, I shaped my argument through this alternative translation of Romans 8:15. I perceive that the biblical teaching of *huiothesia* relates to the old and new being of a human, with the fellowship (communion) aspects rather than the legal (juridical) aspects. A child with a filial *relationship*, born or adopted, does not necessarily have a spiritual *fellowship* with his father and siblings—only the *huioi* (sons) have a spiritual fellowship with God.[18]

Following this introduction are the definitions of the human spirit and the explanation of v.8:15. Then, I analyze the impact of that explanation on the doctrine of adoption before closing it with conclusions.

Human Spirit and the Holy Spirit

The human spirit is a faculty of the human soul, the core of the self, or the deeper self, the highest dimension of a person. "The spirit is the location of faith or unfaith, belief or disbelief."[19] Everyone substantially has a spirit (*pneuma*), quickened (believing spirit), or in a dormant state (unbelieving spirit). The human spirit is not affected by the human *sarx*. When one's spirit is quickened, one's soul is quickened too. An awakened spirit is the prerequisite for participating in the spiritual fellowship hosted by the Holy Spirit. A human spirit can act as

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[18] *See*, Luke 6:35, "you will be *huioi* of the Most High." *Contra* Moisés Silva (rev. ed.), *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), III:682. (*NIDNTTE*)

[19] Claudia Welz, *Humanity in God's Image: An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 126.

a balance from the inner self towards the flesh's willpower because the Spirit guides it.

J.B. Heard explains

> *The pneuma is that part of man which is made in the image of God—it is the conscience, or faculty of God-consciousness which has been depraved by the fall, and which is dormant, though not quite dead. The pneuma in the psychical or natural man has some little sense of the law of God, but no real love for Himself, and therefore it drives man from God, instead of drawing him to God. (…) The pneuma would direct the psyche, and the psyche our carnal appetites. There would not be a single motion of sinful desire. (…) But such is not the state which man is in at present. He begins life with a dormant pneuma, and therefore with desires which have become exorbitant, and with a reason unable to control them.*[20]

Slightly different from J.B. Heard, I see Adam and all humankind are *nepioi* (infants) with dormant (unbelieving) spirits since before their fall;[21] because the object of faith—Jesus Christ—had not been revealed yet. Though Adam could communicate with God, he did not have a spiritual fellowship with God. With a dormant spirit, Adam could not partake in a spiritual fellowship; he had no means, and that is why he fell.

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[20] J.B. Heard, *The Tripartite Nature of Man* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1875), ix-x, 212.

[21] "The Hebrew word *'adam* is a collective noun meaning 'humankind' which comes to refer in the narrative to the specific man Adam. Accordingly we are to understand references to Adam in the two creation accounts (Gen. 1:1 – 2:3 and 2:4–25) as referring to the representative of humanity in general." A.R. Mills, "Adam," in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic,* second ed., eds. Martin Davie, Tim Grass, Stephen R. Holmes, John McDowell and T. A. Noble (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 3.

Any created being with a protological perfection of a somatic being is not as perfect as the Creator. At a time when one walks into the world, one sins.

If Adam had an active spirit that could be degraded by the fall, then there is no point for us to be reinstated into that state with such a spirit. In that case, the constitution of human beings would have no progress. Humans will reiterate their fall and need restoration repeatedly. Since their creation as fleshly Adamic human beings, humans have made discrete progress in conforming to the image of the Son.[22] The problem of sin ends when all human beings have been fully transformed into spiritual beings. If Adam had an active working spirit in a body of flesh, how could he be referred to as a living soul?[23] The ultimate issue is, how can a fleshly perishable Adamic human develop into a spiritually incorruptible one?

James Dunn explains that the human *pneuma* "is that dimension of the human person through which the person relates most directly to God. … it is the *pneuma* which is the highest (or deepest) dimension of the person rather than the *nous*."[24] I maintain that a dormant human *pneuma* should be transformed into a new state that enables it to participate in the spiritual fellowship of the Triune God through the Son. That is the only way for humans to develop into spiritual *beings* and live ultimately.[25]

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[22] Regarding human progress, *see*. John Behr, *Asceticism*, 39.

[23] "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit." 1Co. 15:45 (KJV).

[24] James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 77.

[25] "The only way for man to rise from the lower life to the higher is by being born *ek pneumatos* [from *pneuma*], which is also to be born *ek tou Theou* [from God]. This rebirth is made possible through the descent of the 'Son of Man' from *ta anō* [above] to *ta katō* [below]. This descent is otherwise expressed in the terms, *ho logos sarx egeneto* [the logos became flesh]. The Logos, being *Theos* [God], has the nature of *pneuma* [spirit], and consequently is said to be both *aletheia* [truth or disclosure] and *zoe* [life]. Being *pneuma* [spirit] (not, of course, being 'the Holy

Romans 8:15

ESV translates Romans 8:15, "*For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'*" How do we decide "*pneuma doulesias*" refers to "spirit" and "*pneuma huiothesias*" to "Spirit"? YLT renders, "for ye did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye did receive a spirit of adoption in which we cry, '*Abba* – Father.'" This problem is classical in translating Pauline's *pneuma*; it is difficult to determine whether it is a human spirit or God's Spirit.[26]

A.B. du Toit makes good arguments, but I have a different opinion.[27] The Spirit sent into a human's heart activates the

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Spirit'), He became *sarx* [flesh], partook fully in the experience of this lower world, and gave himself to death (the characteristic mark of *sarx* [flesh]), in love for mankind." C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 226.

[26] In such cases, the New Revised Standard Version translates *pneuma* into Spirit, *or* spirit. For instance, see its translation of Romans 8.

[27] "At face value *pneuma huiothesias* is open to both possible translations. Fortunately, the inter-textual comparison with Gal.4:6 – where the abba cry also appears – helps to resolve this ambiguity, for here the Spirit sent into our hearts is the subject of the abba call. The same would then also apply to the abba cry in Rom8:15. In spite of the three dissenting voices quoted above, there can be little doubt that *pneuma huiothesias* is a reference to the Holy Spirit. The reason for the dilemma that we experience is that, for Paul, there is such a close connection between the Spirit of God and the human spirit. The human *pneuma* functions as the meeting-point where the Spirit engages human existence (Rom.8:16), in other words as the doorway through which the divine Spirit moves into human lives and directs and transforms them. From this perspective, the *Doppeldeutigkeit* in Paul's use of *pneuma* becomes understandable. Often when he may be referring primarily to the human *pneuma*, the Holy Spirit would be in the background and vice versa. It is exactly this double usage that makes the choice so difficult. Let us illustrate this from Rom.7:6, where my contention was that the human *pneuma* is in focus. Although, according to my understanding, the focus is on the human spirit, God's Spirit, as the mediator of this newness of spirit, is still actively present in the semantic substratum of the text. That would explain why other interpreters may turn the situation around and view the Spirit as the primary referent. The problem is that the translator is forced to make an either/or choice. She/he should therefore ask, within a given context, whether the primary focus is on the Spirit of God or on the human spirit." A.B. du Toit, "Translating

human spirit but does not give Himself to the human; instead, he communes with the newly activated spirit. If a person receives the Spirit or a portion of the Spirit to *constitute* that person, then the person is no longer human. Instead, the Spirit ignites human spirits to enable them to participate in God's communion.[28] Only spirits that are related to the Lord Jesus can be paired. Boice renders three possible occurrences of the pair, s-s, S-S, or s-S, excepting S-s.[29] Let us use the human spirit as the primary referent of Rom. 8:15, the object that the Spirit wants to renew (enable). Because when *pneuma* in Rom. 8:15 refers to the Spirit, we must ask, when was the activation of (the giving of faith to) the human spirit? If, during the creation of Adam, then why can Adam fall? If it was after the fall, then when was it? If a dormant spirit can work, then how can the Spirit communicate with it? If it does not need such an activation, why must there be "when the fullness of time had come?"[30] What is the difference between an old-natural-earthly-being and a new-spiritual-heavenly-being?[31]

According to John Owen, the two clauses can be translated into "a servile spirit" and "a filial spirit."[32] This model, where both "*pneuma*" in this verse is implied as human *pneuma*, as spirit rather than the Holy Spirit, is supported by Luther, Dodd,

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Romans: some persistent headaches," *die Skriflig 44*, 3&4 (2010): 594-5.

[28] Analogically, only Bluetooth enabled devices that can be paired with other Bluetooth enabled devices, and they should share a same frequency.

[29] Boice, *Romans*, 2:838-40.

[30] Gal. 4:4.

[31] 1Co. 15:47.

[32] *See*, John Owen's editorial notes, "so we may translate the two clauses here, 'a servile spirit' and 'a filial spirit.' … . – Ed.;" John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. by the Rev. John Owen vicar of Thrussington, Leicestershire (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1849), 296, chapter VIII.15, footnote no. 1.; at a rearranged CCEL pdf at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom38.html, see its page 178, footnote 253.

Lenski, Meyer, Sanday and Headlam, Moo, and others.[33] Hence, after Owen, the translation of Rom. 8:15 in his translation of John Calvin's commentary can alternatively be rendered,

> *For you have not received a servile spirit again to fear; but you have received a filial spirit, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

This verse has no variant reading; thus, the exegesis can proceed with the translation without doing textual criticism. It is a formal equivalence—word-for-word—approach. The meanings indicated by word parsing are added in square brackets. The text source is UBS5.[34] For the Structural Analysis, I use the Clause Annotation from Matt O'Donnell.[35] The word parsings are from Interlinear Bible and PBIK.[36] Hopefully, this temporary translation opens new insights that differ from other renditions.

> *indeed not [you][a] received [a] spirit [of] bondage again into fear but [you][b] received [a] spirit placing [you] as a son[,] by that we scream aloud, Abba the father.*[37]

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[33] *See*, David B. Garner, *Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2016), 116.

[34] Barbara Aland, Bruce M. Metzger, Carlo M. Martini, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Kurt Aland, *The Greek New Testament, Fifth Edition* (*UBS5*) *with Critical Apparatus* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, United Bible Societies, American Bible Society, 2014), 522.

[35] Matt O'Donnell, "The Annotation of the Greek New Testament, Apostolic Fathers and other Hellenistic texts," *Opentext*, http://www.opentext.org/texts/ NT/Rom/view/clause-ch8.v0.html (retrieved March 19, 2021).

[36] Biblos, "Interlinear Bible © 2011 – 2018," https://biblehub.com/interlinear/ galatians/4.htm retrieved March 19, 2021.; Hasan Sutanto, *NT, Greek-Indonesian Interlinear and Concordance, Perjanjian Baru Interlinear Yunani – Indonesia dan Konkordansi Perjanjian Baru* (Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2010).

[37] "in that we scream aloud" or "by that we scream aloud."; *TN*: *a*, *b*, the parsing of the verb *elabete* (received) indicates that it refers to the second person plural.

This verse explains that human beings have a spirit of bondage (the slept, unregenerated spirit, inactive). When revived, the working spirit can cause an old being to become a new being. Theologically (symbolically), the Apostle Paul refers to the person who has it, "become a son (*huios*)." Thus, there is a transformation in one's self. It is not about receiving the Holy Spirit nor a transfer of family.[38]

In one's previous being as an underdeveloped or under-aged child with a dormant (unbelieving) spirit, one can only live *kata sarka* and therefore oblige the guidance of laws (paedagogos), so they do not get lost. In this v.8:15, Paul explained how the Holy Spirit enables humans to start living *kata pneuma* by giving an operating spirit who attends to the Holy Spirit. These believers begin to decide by themselves to follow the Spirit.

The dialogue concerning live *kata sarka* against *kata pneuma* starts from vv.8:1-9. Verse 8:10 says, "yet *your* (*believers'*) *spirit* is alive," and v.8:11 "will also give life to *your mortal bodies* through his Spirit, who lives in you." These verses are the context. Those arguments lead to these v.8:15 and v.8:23, which talk about a person's two steps of *huiothesia*. Again, the context is about a gradual formation of a well-developed human being. The process commences by making one's spirit alive (v.8:10 and 15), then will be finalized by replacing one's mortal body (v.8:11 and 23) with the spiritual one. At the consummation, the temporal earthly component of humans will be dismantled. Humans will have no mortal flesh and be free

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[38] *Cf.*, "[Paul] shows that the spirit of slavery is different from him whom he called above the Spirit of God. … . In this he makes known that the Spirit of adoption is identical with him whom he had above called the Spirit of God. … . So then, the Spirit of God is the same as the Spirit of Christ, who is himself the same as the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Spirit of adoption seems to be called the same [Spirit], as the Apostle's current passage declares. David too seems to be speaking of the same Spirit." Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Book 6-10*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, from Rufinus' Latin translation of the Original Greek (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 60-1.; for the known problem of translation, we have to check the Greek original text that has been translated here into "the Spirit of adoption."

from the drive of the *sarx,* the bondage to live *kata sarka*; thus, no law (paedagogos) is required.

Regarding the clause "his Spirit, who lives *in* you." The word "*in*" does not necessarily mean inside, like "in a bottle," but "a communion" or "an interpenetrated fellowship." Jesus said, "Abide *in* me, and I *in* you."[39]

These distinct stages of the *human constitution* are the key message of Paul's Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. This theme is the teaching that Paul reminded Timothy of and discussed with the Corinthians.[40] The Gospel proclaims that a Messiah will reform human beings because their initially created state of being for temporal existence is unsuitable for the ultimate reality. Thus, the first *huiothesia,* the making of a faithful spirit, ignites the process of stopping the decaying of earthly human beings through their participation in the fellowship with the Source of Life. This way, they can foretaste the infinite communion with God before entering the a-temporality. It refers to the firstfruit of the union, the foretaste of the future, the "already" in temporality.

The key here is to understand why there is an adverb *palin* (again) in the first phrase and that the word "you" refers to the believers. So, the term "again" suggests an imaginary scene where the Holy Spirit takes and quickens *the dormant spirit,*

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[39] John 15:4 (ESV). Emphasis added.

[40] 2Tim.1:7 (ESV), "for God gave us *a spirit* not of fear but of power and love and self-control." Emphasis added. We quote this verse and the ones after, despite to show the same idea with Rom.8:15, the incoherency of the translation in ESV; 1Co.15:45-49 (ESV), "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being' (Gk, a living soul); the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first *but the natural, and then the spiritual.* The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." Note the "life-giving spirits" for the sons, and the two steps of creation, "natural," then "spiritual" human beings. Adam, a *nepios*, was not a spiritual son of God.

then gives back. It is not the giving back of the Holy Spirit nor the dormant spirit *again*. Suppose it is the giving back of the Holy Spirit; in that case, it implies that Adam had the Holy Spirit before his fall, and the Spirit can be dimmed. This way, the Spirit becomes an object, the means used by another agent, rather than the Spirit being the agent who quickens spirits. Another thing is believers ontologically become partly Uncreated. If it is the giving back of the unbelieving spirit again, then the person who receives it remains in his old state of being, which is not the "you." The ignition of the most profound dimension of Adamic humans, their spirits, is the beginning of their revival. This renewal from the inside makes them new beings that overcome death. Also, since then, humans have had a new kind of self-control against their flesh. It works inside their soul to balance the outside world's influence.[41]

> *Born of the Spirit, is "spirit." It is incongruous to make the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the God-head, the opposite of "the flesh" that is still in us or the opposite of our body as the avenue or means through which the sin power works. The dative pneumati (of v.8:14, ed.) is one of [the] means, and the canon cannot be upset that we never use God's Spirit as a means. He uses us as a means, and not we [use] him. It is our "spirit" with which we kill the evil deeds that the sin would like to bring about by misusing our eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc., and all the desires in our old nature that need the body and are*

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[41] *See*, 2Tim1:7, "For God did not give us a spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control." This verse is not only similar in structure but also parallel in meaning with Rom.8:15.; cf, NET Bible Technical Note J. The Holly Spirit can live within us only when we have received a spirit gave at v.7.; *Cf*. "Now it is certain that a person becomes a son of God through the Spirit of adoption, but a slave of God through a spirit of slavery." Origen, 61-2. What is in his original Greek?

> *connected with bodily movements and functions*
> *in a sinful, tempting world.*[42]

R.C.H. Lenski defends that the *pneuma* here cannot be the Holy Spirit. While employing "adoption," Lenski explains,

> *The deduction is also unwarranted that*
> *"adoption" is not to be understood as resting on*
> *a declaration of God's will concerning us but is*
> *an operation of God* in us *which alter us*
> *inwardly.*[43]

Nicoll and Denney support the context of the giving of the human spirit.

> *[Huiothesia] serves to distinguish those who are*
> *made sons by an act of grace from the only*
> *begotten Son of God: ton heautou huion ver.3,*
> *tou idiou huiou ver.32. But the act of grace is not*
> *one which makes only an outward difference in*
> *our position; it is accomplished in* the giving of a
> spirit which creates in us a new nature. *In the*
> *spirit of adoption, we cry Abba, Father. We have*
> *not only the status, but the heart of sons.*
> *Krazomen (often with phone megale) is a strong*
> *word: it denotes the loud irrepressible cry with*
> *which the consciousness of sonship breaks from*
> *the Christian heart in prayer.*[44]

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[42] R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 518-19. Word in square bracket, added.

[43] R.C.H. Lenski, *Romans.*, 522. Emphasis added.

[44] W. Robertson Nicoll ed., James Denney, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, volume II (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), II:648. Emphasis added. Notes: *The Son of Himself* v.3, *the own Son* v.32.

Now we have a split of directions for the future. A *huios* is given an alive spirit and starts becoming a spiritual being.[45] On the other hand, a *nepios*, living in anxiety to the end of time, have no hope. Old beings (*nepioi*), humans made of substances from the earth, remain natural when nothing changes to their spirits.[46] "Servants live in constant fear, they know that they cannot reach God for they know His transcendence."[47]

George S. Duncan correctly explains the backdrop.

> *Paul is emphatic that those who are under law are like children who require to be supervised and controlled, and have no more real freedom than the household slaves. … . His new point is the positive one that even tutelage suggests a future period of emancipation; and in putting His children under restrictive discipline for a period God Himself was looking forward to a time when they should be of age to enter into their inheritance as sons.*[48]

Thus, *huiothesia* does not *transfer* a person from one family to another. Instead, it *transforms* the person's unbelieving spirit— *pneuma doulesias* has the potential to become *pneuma huiothesias*—which augments the owner of the spirit from an old being (infant) to a new being (*huios*, son), according to the

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[45] *Cf.*, 1Joh.4:1-6. ESV titles, "Test the Spirits." Peruse v.4. The v.6c probably can be rendered, "By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." The next topic of John is love. From receiving a spirit (having a fellowship) then sharing love. See also, 1Co.2:11-12, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God." Natural versus spiritual beings.

[46] 1Co. 15:47.

[47] Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 227.; Käsemann's "a servant" should be read as "a minor."

[48] George S. Duncan, the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, The Moffat Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), 125.

image of the New Being.[49] The transformation of the state of being of a believer leads to the transfer to a new status. Heinrich August Schott writes, "*huiothesia* emphatically says the crossing (or passing) of what had been a slave state (male) child to a state which enjoys the entire right and benefits corresponding to a son."[50] "The Christians were *transferred* from one to the other *state* by Jesus' salvific death."[51] Following Jesus' death, he sends the Holy Spirit, who starts quickening the spirits of humans. The human constitution is the work of the Holy Triune. Adamic humans must wait for the Incarnation to occur before the quickening of the human spirit commences because the Father wants to graft human *huio*-ship to the Messiah. Those who do not know and do not wait for the promised son of [a] woman have no association with eternity.[52] The Messiah is the only possible connection between the Uncreated and the created. *Huiothesia* teaches about the Triune God and the immutability of the human Messiah.

Back to the translation. BDAG renders "*Abba*, the Aramaic form used in prayer and in family circle, taken over by Greek-

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[49] Romans 8:29.

[50] Schott, in his Epistola ad Galatas, Caput IV writes, "*huiothesia emphatice dic. de transitu ex statu servili qualis fuerat puerorum* (v.3.) *in conditionem filii, qua usum faciat integrum cuiusque iuris et commodi filio competentis.*" Heinrich August Schott, *Epistolae Pauli ad Thessalonicenses et Galatas* (Lipsiae: Sumtibus Joannis Ambrosii Barthii, 1834), 490. The Latin of Schott was corrected and translated here based on the original.

[51] "Paul expresses the diachronic boundary either by the temporal antithesis 'no longer-but' as in 2 Corinthians 5:15, 16, 17 ('the old has passed away, see things are new') and Galatians 2:20; 4:5/7, or he construes the temporal succession of *two different states* of affairs with the concept that the Christians were transferred *from one to the other state* by Jesus' salvific death: from one relationship of possession to the other (1Co.6:18-29, 7:22-23); redeemed from the 'curse' of the law or enslavement through the law (Gal.3:13; 4:5/7) and transferred to the status of 'adoption as children' (Gal 4:5: *huiothesia*); 'set free' from this world (Gal.1:4); from sin to righteousness (Rom.3:21-26; 8.3-4; 2Co.5:21)." Michael Wolter, *Paul: An outline of His Theology*, transl. Robert L. Brawley (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015), 111-2. Emphasis added.

[52] Gen. 3:15; son of woman means a fully human.

speaking Christians as a liturgical formula."[53] Many scholars argue that *pater* is the translation of *Abba*.[54] Still, Moisés Silva explains, "other Jewish writings make clear that this was the word normally used by *adult sons and daughters*, and that it could even be used as a respectful title for scholars, similar to the term *rabbi*."[55] Silva clarifies that *Abba* has no childish character. This argument entails that the underaged children (*nepioi, ne-epos*, not speaking) may use other words to call the Father, or they do not refer to him. The Lord Jesus, as the *Huios* of God, uses this call. When believers imitate the Lord to call "*Abba*," their status is comparable to the status of the Lord.[56]

If we subscribe to Silva, "*Abba*" may not parallel to "*ho pater*." In other words, "*ho pater*" does not translate "*Abba*." In the Greek mind, *pater* is "the supreme deity, who is responsible for the origin and care of all that exists, *Father, Parent*."[57] Silva explains,

> *The idea of the fatherhood of God was given a philosophical interpretation in ancient Greece. Plato, in his cosmological elaboration of the idea, emphasizes the creator relationship of God, the "universal father," to the entire cosmos (Tim.*

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[53] Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (BDAG) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1.

[54] *Cf.*, "The appositional nominative *ho Pater* is quite regular after the vocative *Abba*; it is the doubling of the Aramaic and the Greek terms for Father that is so exceptional." R.C.H. Lenski, *Romans*, 524.

[55] Silva, *NIDNTTE,* I:85. Emphasis added.

[56] *Cf.*, "So slaves were not desired or considered appropriate as adoptees, and moreover, it was not common or socially accepted in Roman conventions and law to adopt others in the situation where a legitimate heir already existed. Therefore, it should be noted that Paul's adoption metaphor was unusual, because the metaphor alludes to adopting slaves in the presence of a legitimate heir, and this metaphor functions to stress God's unusual and extraordinary favour and love to the believers in Romans 8:15." Kyu Seop Kim, "Another Look at Adoption in Romans 8:15 in Light of Roman Social Practices and Legal Rules," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* Vol. 44 No. 3 (2014): 143.

[57] BDAG, 787.

28c; 4la; et al.). According to Stoic teaching,
God's authority as father pervades the universe:
he is "creator, father, and sustainer" of human
beings, who are his children, related to him
(Epict. 1.9.7; cf. Cleanthes' famous hymn to
Zeus). [58]

If that is the case, then it is possible when I add "[to]" to the phrase "*Abba,* [to] *ho pater.*" Thus, the Christians call the universal creator *Abba.*[59]

> *indeed you did not receive a spirit of bondage*
> *again into fear, but you received a spirit making*
> *[you] a huios (son), by that, we scream aloud,*
> *Abba [to] the Father [of all beings].*

This rendering makes a significant change. It opens up another insight. Christian God is the creator and Father of all human beings, not only of the Israelites; still, only when *nepioi* have become sons or daughters (*huioi*) can they call him "*Abba*!" resembling the *huios* Nation Israel calls him respectfully. The same structure can be found in Galatians 4:6.

The *nepioi*, who are in bondage to their *sarx* can enter a new relationship with the Son; they are transferred from objects of salvation to co-heirs. They are adult sons in Christ, liberated from the bondage holding them to their *old being* and facticity. Fleshly, humans can become spiritual through the work of the Triune God. It is God's grace, not the effort of a *plasma.*[60] The

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[58] Silva, *NIDNTTE,* III:678.

[59] *Cf.*, "*Abba, Father.* Comp. Mk. xiv.36; Rom. viii.15. *ho pater* the Father, is not added in order to explain the Aramaic *Abba* for Greek readers. Rather the whole phrase "*Abba ho pater* had passed into the early Christian prayers, the Aramaic title by which Christ addressed his Father (Mk. xiv.36) being very early united with the Greek synonym. Such combinations of Hebrew and Greek addresses having the same meaning were employed in rabbinical writings. Comp. also Apoc. ix. 11; xii. 9." Marvin R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament,* Vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1897), IV:138.

[60] For the definition of Ireneaus' *plasma, see,* John Behr, *Asceticism,* 39.

old being is temporal and transitory, but the spiritual being is eternal—in that they exist if God wills.[61]

Huiothesia is a metaphor. It is an analogy using the human family as a reference. It is a sub-act of the Creator, as a part of God's act of creation, to inaugurate his under-aged children for becoming his sons and co-heirs along with the pre-existent Son and Heir. Their new state of being brings them into a new relationship within themselves and a union with Christ. This act of God constitutes human beings from the initial (*nepio*-ship) to its consummated state (*huio*-ship). They are stages of the creation process.

The Impact on the Doctrine of Adoption

The Adamic humans are somatic, while the Christic humans are spiritual (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:45-49). In adoption, a physical human is transferred into a new family (salvation), which does not change the physical person being transmitted. Without the transformation, the adopted person is still an old being like all other *nepioi* under laws.

The first *huiothesia* in Rom. 8:15 brings the natural state of human beings to the spiritual state. As we translate "*pneuma huiothesias*" not into "the Spirit of adoption" but to "a spirit placing [you] as a *huios* (son)," or "a spirit making [you] a *huios* (son)," then there is no basis for the teaching of adoption. "The Apostle Paul returns to the imagery from Gal. 4:4-7, but he does so in this instance with considerable modifications. The '*huiothesia*' that Christ effected in Gal. 4:5 and now in Rom. 8:15 refers to the Spirit who works on the spirit."[62]

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[61] *Cf.*, John Behr, *Asceticism*, 40.

[62] Inspired by Fee's sentences, with changes; to show that it is true that *huiothesia* is the work of the Spirit on human spirit instead through adoption. *Cf.* Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 248.

As we learned from Ireneaus regarding the type and antitype, Adam is the protological human being, and Christ is eschatological. Both are under God's economy. Thus, the *nepio*-state is the type of the *huio*-state of the created humans.

> *Hence, also, Adam himself was termed by Paul 'the type of the One who was to come', because the Word, the Maker of all things, prefigured in him the economy that was to come of the humanity in regard to the Son of God; God having established that the first man should be psychical, namely, that he should be saved by the spiritual. For, since he who saves already existed, it was necessary that he who would be saved should come into existence, that the One who saves should not exist in vain. (AH 3. 22. 3)* [63]

Believers are not transferred into God's "created family" but are born into it as unbelievers; they experience transformation while still in that family. This way, one transcends the old nature of humans. One becomes a renewed human in the pattern of the New Being of that house. Only in this family are there transformations of children. Only in this family do they grow to perfection. Outside this "created family," there is nothing, not even another family. What changed following humans' transformation to become the *huioi* (sons) of God, like Christ, is their participation in the fellowship of [the] spirit. It is the privilege of the upper-tier category of God's children. This way, we see other people, agnostics, atheists, or of different faiths, are members of God's created family.

Contra Trumper, if we want to construct the Doctrine of Adoption, we should not build it based on *huiothesia* passages. But is there any other passage that teaches divine adoption? The Bible does not talk about divine adoption but human

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[63] *Cf.*, John Behr, *Asceticism*, 59.

adoption: Moses. In his principal works, Trumper traced the history of adoption.[64] Regrettably, he forgets to ask one crucial question; when did *huiothesia* become *adoptio*/adoption? Desiderius Erasmus has explained the inappropriate expression of Vulgata's phrase,

> *If we take [the Vulage's phrase] to mean the adoption of those who were previously sons of Satan, the Scripture does not intend this. The Latin expression is inappropriate – one would rather have to say the spirit 'of adoption into [the place of] the sons of God.'… For he is not distinguishing here the sons of God from the sons of men, but rather the sons of grace from the servants of the Law.*[65]

The product of *huiothesia* is freedom from the tribal laws of the Jews and Gentiles to enter a *spiritual* brotherhood of humans in Christ through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The *Abba* call of Israelites now belongs to the Gentiles too. This way, Christians—following the Incarnate Son—introduce the Universal Creator to all God's created children. Christian believers' fatherhood is not a tribal covenant mediated by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but direct to the Creator.[66] Human

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[64] Tim J. R. Trumper, "A Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Edinburgh, 2001); Tim J. R. Trumper, "A Theological History of Adoption: I. An Account," *SBET* 20 (2002): 4-28; Tim J. R. Trumper, "The Theological History of Adoption: II. A Rationale," *SBET* 20 (2002): 177-202.

[65] Robert D. Sider, *Collected Works of Erasmus. New Testament Scholarship. Annotations on Romans* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 210.

[66] *Cf.*, Silva, *NIDNTTE*, III:679.; "The Lord's Prayer reveals God the Father to be the one who moves history towards true humanity. He gives us a foretaste of that humanity in the experience of forgiveness and reconciliation, and in the sustenance that comes in times of temptation. Most of all, however, the prayer reveals Jesus to be the human face of God, for "Abba" is an address of deepest intimacy which only the son could use. In giving his disciples this prayer Jesus admitted them to the privilege of divine sonship and daughterhood, the right to call God "Abba" (*cf.* Rom. 8.15-16), and thereby bestowed on them the true humanity of the Kingdom of God." Robert Hamerton-Kelly, *God the*

salvation cannot be found in a human family like the OT or the earthly Christian family. When God is the "creator, father, and sustainer" of all human beings, the act of adoption that *transfers* an Adamic human to God's family has no significance. What matters to humankind is a *transformation* that enables them to participate in spiritual unity with the Messiah's spirit. It brings a new status from a minor to a major, from an old being to a new being.

Recall the principle of "*ad fontes*" (back to the source). The question is whether we want to defend a translation to fit our theological stance or try to reveal what the Apostle Paul meant with *huiothesia*. How far do we want to go back? By reading adoption to *huiothesia*, we abate the Gospel. The gains are not worth the losses. We can reevaluate our position on whether we do an intellectual conversion or continue advocating adoption.

Conclusions

Recall Trumper's refusal to relate *huiothesia* with extra-Pauline NT texts. In *corpus Johanneum*, John 1:12 says in the last phrase, "to become *tekna* of God." This concept is parallel to, but not the metaphor of, *huiothesia*, for both are metaphors that aim to explain similar ideas. This Johannine metaphor should not be read as adoption for becoming children of God, but it denotes God's *nepioi* who are reborn from Spirit and thus become God's *tekna*. All created children, either in their *nepio*-ship or *tekna*-ship (in Pauline, *huio*-ship), belong to God. Concerning Trumper's argument that Johannine's and Pauline's theologies employ different concepts and terms, and that *tekna* and *huios* do not share one spectrum of meaning, we should revisit the use of "sonship."

We must not approach *huiothesia* with a preconception of a legal paradigm named adoption. Its exposition must reflect the actual language and, most importantly, the context. Placing

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Father: Theology and Patriarchy in the Teaching of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 77.

another context to replace a true context complicates the talk. It conceals and subsides the Gospel. Christians who subscribe to adoption will misunderstand their salvation. Do we want it?

After studying this verse, I recognize another worldview. I see unbelievers (*nepioi*) as members of God's family but of different states. They are the inputs for, or object of, God's act of salvation, while believers (*huioi*) are the output. Believers are no different from unbelievers because both are the object of God's love. The difference is they are on diverse sides of the equation or the function called *huiothesia*. Even when Christians claim they are the citizen of Heaven (eternality), they still share the Father with the citizen of temporality.

Human freedom starts when the human spirit is revived. Unlike those who exist temporally in the somatic corruptible old state of being, those in the new form have spiritual, incorruptible life and glory. Both somatic and spiritual beings are under the economy and providence of God, but only in the spiritual state of being the created being can live a-temporally, free from the temporal existence, to enjoy God's love forever.

Because of the spiritual awakening, like the *Huios* (Son) of Man and the *tekna* congregation of Israel, Christian believers can respectfully call the Father of creation "*Abba*!" And like the Son, they can take care of the underaged children of their Father.[67] The teaching of *huiothesia* concerns God's fatherhood, or motherhood, to all His creation.

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[67] *Cf.*, Matthew 5:44-5, Luke 6:35.

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