1. INTRODUCTION

This study of the concept *children of God* in Romans 8 is not intended as a word study and therefore no diachronic study is done of the semantically related Greek words. This study aims at determining from Romans 8 itself what Paul - under the guidance of the Holy Spirit - intended with the concept *children of God*.

Hereby the principle that the Bible is its own interpreter is not ruled out. The intention is, however, to determine what the meaning of *children of God* is in Romans 8, and not in the whole Bible. Thus the hermeneutical rule that Sacred Scripture is its own interpreter is purposely applied in such a manner that Romans 8 itself is always the focal point.

The prime question which this study attempts to answer is: What does God reveal in connection with the *children of God* in Romans 8? Commentaries, monographs and so on have been consulted, but only afterwards. All the work is done on the Greek text itself. The intention is not to dogmatize over the concept *children of God*, but to reach the meaning of the concept - scientifically substantiated and controllable - from the text itself.

To reach this end, the syntactic structure of Romans 8 is analysed. The syntactic facet of language gives what Loader (1978:19) calls 'n objektiewe kriterium ... om die strukture van die taaluiting na te spoor op ons pad na die betekenis daarvan'. The syntactic structural analysis and the insights based upon such an analysis are done according to a method which has been drafted personally (1980). The main part of this structural analysis is included under 3.

The syntactic structural analysis is used as basis, rationale, motivation and frame of reference. The syntactic components of each verse are numbered progressively from 1 in the structural analysis. When something issues from the structural analysis, reference to the relevant component is done in the following way: C19.3 which refers to component 3 of verse 19.

2. THE CONCEPT CHILDREN OF GOD

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2.1 Greek words and phrases in Romans 8 for and in connection with children of God

Paul uses two words in Romans 8 whereby he designates children of God, namely ὑιοὶ and τέκνα. He uses one phrase which according to the context of verse 29, also means children of God, namely ἕκκριμον τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ ὑιοῦ αὐτοῦ. Paul uses the following words to designate the action being made children of God/being adopted as children of God, namely ὑιοθέσια. God is also addressed by the believers as Father, namely ἀβᾶ ὁ πατὴρ.

The frequency of these words and phrases is the following:

* ὑιοὶ θεοῦ
1) Verse 14: Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons.
2) Verse 19: All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his sons.

* τέκνα θεοῦ
1) Verse 16: God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children.
2) Verse 17: Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings ...
3) Verse 21: The creation itself will be set free ... and will share the glorious freedom of the children of God.

* ὑιοθέσια
1) Verse 15: ... the Spirit makes you God's children
2) Verse 23: ... we wait for God to make us his sons

* ἕκκριμον τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ ὑιοῦ αὐτοῦ
1) Verse 29: Those whom God had already chosen he also set apart to become like his Son ...

* κραυμένον ἀβὰ ὁ πατὴρ
1) Verse 15: ... by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, 'Father! my Father!'

2.2 The concept children of God elsewhere in the New Testament

* ὑιοὶ θεοῦ: Paul (Rm 9:26; 2 Cor 6:18; Gl 3:26, 4:6f)
Other (Mt 5:9, 45; Lk 20:36)
* tékna theou: Paul (Rm 9:8; Phlp 2:15)
   Other (Jn 1:12, 11:52; 1 Jn 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2)

* huiothesía:²) Paul (Rm 9:4; Gl 4:5; Eph 1:5.

* sūmmorphos tēs eikōnos tou huioú autoú:
This phrase occurs in the New Testament only in Romans 8:29. The two key words of the phrase, namely sūmmorphos and eikōn, are used elsewhere with meanings which more or less resemble their meanings in Romans 8:29.

The following etymologically related words are only used by Paul:

sūmmorphos: Phlp 3:21³)
summorphízomai: Phlp 3:10³)

Eikōn also is used only by Paul in the New Testament with the same meaning it has in Romans 8:29, 1 Corinthians 11:7; 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:4; Colossians 1:15; 3:10.

* God as Father of the believers⁴)

Father as a vocative (Gl 4:6)⁵)

Father as the name of God, illustrative of the Father-child relationship:
1) As part of the letter greetings (Rm 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; Gl 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:2; Phlp 1:2; Col 1:2; 2 Th 1:2; 2 Tm 1:2; 1 Tm 1:2; Tt 1:4; Phlm 3).
2) God as universal Father (1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:6)
3) God as our/your Father (2 Cor 6:18; Gl 1:4; Phlp 4:20; 1 Th 1:3; 3:11, 13).
4) God as the Father (Gl 1:1; Eph 2:18; 5:20; Phlp 2:11; Col 1:12; 3:17; 1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:1).

* ek theou egennēthēsan and ek theou
The phrases ek theou egennēthēsan and ek theou do not occur in Paul's writings.⁶) These phrases however, are semantically equivalent to huioí/tékna theou, and thus the occurrences of these phrases are given:

ek theou egennēthēsan (Jn 1:13; 3:3, 6, 7, 8; Ac 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1 (3x); 4:18(2x)).

ek theou (Jn 8:47; 1 Jn 3:10; 4:4, 6; 5:19; 3 Jn 11⁷)

* país theou
The phrase país theou/autoú/sou is used in the New Testament only
with the following meanings:

1) Jesus as pais theou.
2) Israel collectively as pais theou (Lk 1:54).
3) King David as pais theou (Lk 1:69; Ac 4:25).

2.3 Summary

The designation of the believers as children of God is chiefly restricted to the writings of Paul and John. Only the phrase huioi theou occurs outside these authors, namely in Matthew 5:9, 45 and Luke 20:36.

Paul uses huioi theou and tekna theou synonymously. The word huiothesia is used only by Paul. This word does not occur in the Greek Versions of the Old Testament, including the apocryphal books. It is not used by any author prior to the Christian era.

The phrase summorphyous tês eikónos tou huiou autoû is used only in Romans 8:29. Two words from this phrase however are used by Paul elsewhere, namely summorphyos (and its root equivalent verb, summorphizomai) and eikon.

The designation of God as Father of the believers occurs often in the whole New Testament. Paul uses the word patēr in this connection with four nuances.

The Johanne phrases (ek theou egennethesan) and ek theou exhibit important semantic equivalence to the children of God terminology in Romans 8.

3. THE STRUCTURAL LOCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD TERMINOLOGY IN ROMANS 8

3.1 Syntactic structural analysis of Romans 8

Verse

1  (1) οὐδὲν (2α) ἃρα
    (3) μῦν
    (4) κατὰκριμα
    (2b) ἔστι
    (5) τοὺς
    (6) ἐν Χριστῷ
    (7) Ἰησοῦ

2  (1α) ὁ (2α) γὰρ (1b) νομὸς
    (3) τοῦ πνεῦματος
    (4) τῆς ζωῆς
    (5) ἐν Χριστῷ
    (6) Ἰησοῦ
    (2b) ἑλευθέρωσέν
    (7) σε
    (8) ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου
    (9) τῆς ἁμαρτίας
    (10) καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.
13  
(1a) εἰ  (2a) γὰρ  (3) κατὰ σάρκα  
   (1b) ζητε  
(2b) μελλετε ἀκοφνύσχελν  
(4a) εἰ  (5a) δὲ  (6) πνεῦματι  
   (7) τὰς πρᾶξεις  
   (8) τοῦ σῶματος  
(4b) θανατούτε  
(5b) ξῆσασθε.  

14  
(1) δοσιν  (2a) γὰρ  
   (3) πνεῦματι  
   (4) θεοῦ  
(5) ἄγοντας  
(6) οὗτοι  
(7) υἱοὶ  
(8) θεοῦ  
(2b) εἰσεν.  

15  
(1) οὐ γὰρ ἔλαβετε  
   (2) πνεῦμα  
   (3) δουλεῖας  
   (4) πάλιν  
(5) εἰς φόβον  
(6) ἄλλα ἔλαβετε  
   (7) πνεῦμα  
(8) υἱοθεσίας  
(9) ἐν ψ  
(10) χρᾶσομεν  
(11) Αββα  
(12) ὁ πατὴρ.
24 (1a) ἔπ (2a) γὰρ (1b) ἐλπίζω
(2b) ἐσώθημεν
(3) ἐλπίζω (4a) δὲ
(5) βλέπομένη
(4b) οὐκ ἔστων (6) ἐλπίζω.
(7) δὲ (8a) γὰρ
(9) βλέπει
(10) τῶς
(8b) ἔλπιζει;

25 (1a) εἰ (2a) δὲ
(3) δὲ
(4) οὐ βλέπομεν
(1b) ἐλπίζομεν
(2b) ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.

26 (1) ἂσαίτως (2a) δὲ
(3) καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα
(2b) συναντηλαμβάνεται
(5) ἀσθενεύω
(4) τῇ ἀσθενεύω
(6) τὸ (7a) γὰρ
(8) τί
(9) προσευχόμεθα
(10) καθὸ δὲτ
(7b) οὐκ ὁδικοὶ
(11a) ἀλλὰ
(12) αὐτὸ
(13) τὸ πνεῦμα
(11b) ὑπερεντυχάνει
(14) στεναγμοῖς
(15) ἀλαλῆτοις.
30 (1) οὐς δὲ
(2) προώρισεν
(3) τοῦτος
(4) καὶ ἐκάλεσεν'
(5) καὶ οὐς
(6) ἐκάλεσεν
(7) τοῦτος
(8) καὶ ἑλκώονεν'
(9) οὐς δὲ
(10) ἑλκώονεν
(11) τοῦτος
(12) καὶ ἑλκώονεν.

31 (1) τι
(2) οὖν ἐρωθευ
t(3) καὶ ταύτα;
(4) εἰ
(5) δὲ θεοῖς
(6) ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
(7) τίς
(8) καθ' ἡμῶν;

32 (1) δὲ γε
(2a) τοῦ
(2b) ψεοῦ
(3) οὐκ οὐκ
(4) οὐκ ἐπέβαλσατο
(5a) ἄλλα
(5b) παρέδωκεν
(6) ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
(7) καύτως
(8) αὐτῶν
(9a) καὶ οὐχὶ
(9b) ξαφνίσταται;
(10) οὖν αὐτῶ
(11) τὰ κάντα
(12) ἡμῖν.
3.2 Thought structure analysis of Romans 8

The following analysis of the thought structure of Romans 8 is done with the preceding syntactic structural analysis as basis and motivation - and frame of reference. No complete analysis of the thought structure is given here, but only the demarcation of the relevant greater and smaller thought units, as well as the transition of thought from one particular thought unit to another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses</th>
<th>Analysis of the thought structure</th>
<th>Motivation arising from the syntactic structural analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Based on the argumentation of the preceding chapters, Paul comes to a conclusion, namely that there is no condemnation for those who live in union with Christ Jesus. This conclusion is at the same time the basis for Paul's argumentation in Romans 8.</td>
<td>Introduced by the concluding paratactic conjunction ἀρα.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-11</td>
<td>Verses 2-11 motivate the thesis in verse 1 as follows: You are freed from death, because Christ's life-giving Spirit lives in you and you are therefore child and heir of God.</td>
<td>Introduced by the motivating paratactic conjunction γὰρ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>Based on the argumentation in the preceding verses that the Spirit of God lives in us, the following command is given: Be led by the Spirit of God, and thus give evidence that you are a child of God.</td>
<td>Verse 12 is introduced by the double concluding paratactic conjunctions ἀρα and ὡν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>Verses 18-30 motivate what it means to be heir of God and co-heir with Christ. It means that in the present era we suffer with Christ, but not without the assured view of and intense longing for God's revelation in the coming era of our glory with Christ as God's children.</td>
<td>Introduced by the explanatory paratactic conjunction γὰρ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18 Verse 18 serves as introduction and basis for the motivation of what it means to be heir of God and co-heir with Christ: the present suffering does not compare with the glory which God will reveal to us in the coming era.

19-27 Verses 19-27 give a fourfold reason why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory:

19-22 1) The first motivation why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory: the creation's eager expectation and longing that God reveals who his children are.

23-25 2) The second motivation: our own expectant longing that God reveals that he has adopted us as his children.


28-30 4) The fourth motivation: we show that God - because of his electoral love - will complete his work, yes, that he will glorify us.

Introduced by the motivating paratactic conjunction gar.

Introduced by the motivating paratactic conjunction gar.

Introduced by the explanatory paratactic conjunction gar.

Dε continues the gar of verse 19

Dε continues the gar of verse 19 (and v.23).

Dε continues the gar of verse 19 (and of vv.23, 26)

3.3 The structural location of each particular word/phrase

The structural location of each relevant word or phrase is designated by first determining the larger and smaller thought unit and its theme. Secondly a dynamic translation of the immediate context of the relevant component is made. This dynamic translation is based on the syntactic structural analysis and the thought structure analysis.

3.3.1 Words/phrases in the smaller thought unit verses 12-17

The smaller thought unit verses 12-17 is in the larger thought unit
verses 2-17, which has the following theme: 'To be "in Christ" means that you are freed from death, because the life-giving Spirit of Christ lives in you; you must let yourself be led by the Spirit of God, and thus show evidence that you are a child of God'. The smaller thought unit verses 12-17 has the following theme: 'The salvation imperative: because the Spirit of God lives in us, we receive the call: Be led by the Spirit of God, and thus show evidence that you are a child of God'.

3.3.1.1 C14.7+8: huioi theou

Verse 13: If you allow yourselves to be ruled by your human nature, you are going to die. You, however, will live. The condition is that you stop your sinful actions. You won't be able to do it by yourselves, but by the Spirit.

Verse 14: The reason why you will only then (i.e. if you stop your sinful actions) live, is that only those are children of God who let the Spirit of God lead them.

3.3.1.2 C15.8: huiothesia

Verse 14: ... only those are children of God who let the Spirit of God lead them.

Verse 15: The reason why your sonship of God becomes evident only when you let the Spirit of God lead you, is that by the Spirit whom you have received you are made children of God.

3.3.1.3 C15.10-12: krazomen abba ho patēr

Verse 15: The reason why your sonship of God becomes evident only when you let the Spirit of God lead you, is that by the Spirit whom you have received, you are made children of God. The Spirit thus does not make you slaves to God, so that you have to be afraid of God again. Instead, the Spirit lets you address God intimately and personally as 'abba!', that is 'Dad!'.

3.3.1.4 C16.7+8: tekna theou

Verse 16: Verse 16 continues the line of thought of verses 14, 15 in that it is stated that this same Spirit gives evidence with our spirit. The content of this evidence is that we are children of God.
Verse 17: Verse 17 continues the argumentation of verse 16: Because we are children of God, we are also heirs of God. Because we are heirs of God, we are co-heirs with Christ. The reason for this heirdom is that we suffer with Christ, the result being that we are glorified with him.

3.3.2 Words/phrases in the smaller thought unit verses 19-22

The smaller thought unit verses 19-22 is part of the larger thought unit verses 18-30 which has as theme: 'To be heir of God and co-heir with Christ means that in the present era we suffer with Christ, but not without the assured view of and intense longing for God's revelation in the coming era of our glory with Christ as God's children'. The smaller thought unit verses 19-22 has the following theme: 'The first reason why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory: The creation's eager expectation and longing that God will reveal who his children are'.

Verse 18: ... the present suffering does not compare with the glory which God will reveal to us in the coming era.

Verse 19: The first reason why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory is the creation's eager expectation and longing that God reveal who his children are.

Verse 19: The first reason why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory is the creation's eager expectation and longing that God reveal who his children are.

Verse 20: The reason for the creation's eager expectation is the fact that the creation has in the past been condemned to lose its purpose. It was not condemned of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. For the condemned creation, however, there is a hope, an affirmed expectation.

Verse 21: The content of this affirmed expectation is that also the creation itself will be freed. It will be freed from its enslavement to decay, to the freedom which adheres to the glory of the children of God.
3.3.3 The word in the smaller thought unit verses 23-25

The smaller thought unit verses 23-25 is part of the larger thought unit verses 18-30, with the theme noted in 3.2.2. The theme of the smaller thought unit verses 23-25 is the following: 'The second reason why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory: our own expectant longing that God reveal that he has adopted us as his children'.

3.3.3.1 C23.10: huiōthesían

Verse 23: Not only the creation groans, but even we who already have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts, even we groan within ourselves. This groaning, however, is not without prospect: We groan while we want for God to reveal that he has adopted us as his children. This revelation of our adoption as children means that God sets our bodies free.

3.3.4 The phrase in the smaller thought unit verses 28-30

The smaller thought unit verses 28-30 is part of the larger thought unit verses 18-30, with the theme noted in 3.3.2. The smaller thought unit verses 28-30 has the following theme: 'The fourth reason why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory: We know that God - because of his electoral love - will complete his work, yes, that he will glorify us'.

3.3.4.1 C29.4-7: summorphous tēs eikónos tou huioû autoû

Verse 28: The knowledge that serves as fourth reason why the present suffering does not compare with the coming glory, is that God lets all things work together for the good of them who love God. Those who love God, are those whom he has decided to call.

Verse 29: The first part of the fourfold realization of the knowledge that God lets all things work together for the good of them who love God, is that he has set apart those whom he has already known, to become conformed to the image of his Son. The purpose of this predestination is that Christ should be the First among many brothers.

3.4 Conclusion

The concept children of God is central in Romans 8, not only because the children of God terminology is used at cardinal structural
locations, but also because verse 14 - which is a very important verse concerning the children of God terminology - is, viewed from a certain angle, the nuclear verse of the whole of Romans 8.

The analysis of the thought structure of Romans 8 reveals that verse 14 is not only the nuclear verse of verses 12-17, but also of the whole of verses 1-30. (Also verses 31-39 can be included; as climactic conclusion not only does it cohere with Romans 8:1-30, but with the whole section from chapter 5.)

That verse 14 is indeed the nuclear verse of verses 1-39 is evident from the thought structure analysis in the following way:

Verse 14 is the nuclear verse of the thought unit verses 12-17. This is evident from the fact that the thought structure analysis reveals that this thought unit is dominated by the command that the believer must let himself be led by the Spirit of God, and thus show evidence that he is a child of God. This theme is summed up completely in verse 14.

The thought structure analysis furthermore reveals that all the important issues of the smaller thought units in verses 1-39 are to be found in verse 14:

1. In verses 1-4 the Holy Spirit reveals why it is possible for the believer to let the Holy Spirit lead him: because he is in Christ.

2. In verses 5-8 Paul explains why those who are being led by the Holy Spirit and not by their sinful nature, can fulfill the law: the Spirit brings life and peace, but the human nature brings enmity with God.

3. In verses 9-11 God reveals what the relationship between the Spirit and the believer is, and what the function of the Spirit concerning the believer is: the Spirit lives in the believer, and through the Spirit God will quicken the believers' mortal bodies.

4. Towards the end of verses 12-17, namely verse 17, it is designated what it means to be a child of God: You are heir, yes, heir of God, and co-heir with Christ.

5. In verses 18-30 it is shown what it means to be heir of God and co-heir with Christ: It means that in the present era we suffer with Christ, but not without the assured view of and intense longing for God's revelation in the coming era of our glory with Christ as God's children.

6. In verses 31-39 Paul - because of the preceding argumentation
breaks out into his song of victory: We are complete conquerors because God loves us in Christ.

4. THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND THE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY

4.1 The children of God and God the Father

4.1.1 God the Father makes people his children

It is generally accepted that it is not natural to be a child of God, but that God in his love brings about the sonship (Schweizer 1972: 390, 399; Van Leeuwen & Jacobs 1932:148; Jonker 1969:119; Nygren 1949:328). It is, however, imperative to determine from Romans 8 itself the reason why people become children of God, and not to dogmatize over it.

In Romans 8 the key for determining the reason why people become children of God, lies in verse 29. In verse 29 God reveals through Paul that he has set apart those whom he has already known, to become conformed to the image of his Son, with the purpose that Christ should be the first among many brothers. Christ is huı́des theou (C29.7+8). Because C29.8a-11b is an adverbial purpose clause to C29.1b, it is to be deduced that predestination to summórphous tēs eikōnos tou huīou autoī has in view that Christ should be prōtōikos en pollois adelphois if the adelphoi are also huīoi theou. Thus, those who are destined to be conformed to the image of his Son, are themselves huīoi theou.

Therefore: The way in which people become huīoi theou, is that God destines them to be summórphous tēs eikōnos tou huīou autoī. It is evident that God takes the initiative. He makes people his children by destining them to become conformed to the image of his Son.

This fact sheds light on the meaning of huiothesía. The word huiothesía in verses 15, 23 means adoption as children. In not one of the verses is it stated who the adopter is. On the basis of the conclusion that God makes people his children, it can be deduced that huiothesía has God as assumed subject. God is the one who adopts.10)

Also the meaning of the phrase huīoi/tekna theou (vv.14, 16, 19, 21) becomes clearer. The genitive theou is adjectival every time to huīoi/tekna. The most natural transformation of this syntactic unit is: God owns the children/the children belong to God. Such a transformation, however, is not in accordance with the context, because God is active concerning the sonship of people: God does not only own them, but he makes them his children. The meaning
of the phrase *children of God* is thus in the first place 'God makes us his children, he becomes our father'.

The genitive *theou*, therefore, is not possessive, but subjective.

4.1.2 Child-father relationship as opposed to slave-master relationship

From verse 15 it is evident that the opposite of being a child of God is to be a slave of God. People who have not been adopted by God as his children live in a slave-master relationship with God (C15.3, and cf. Gl 4:6f). Such people are afraid of God (C15.4+5), as a slave is afraid of his master. However, when God has adopted somebody as his child, the opposite is true; then there exists an intimate child-father relationship which allows man, as child of God, to address God personally and openly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as *'abba!' ('Dad!'). Rightly Schrenk (1967:1006) says that this address in connection with the verb *kaiygeta* does not designate enthusiasm and ecstacy, but childlike and happy assurance, as opposed to the fear of a slave.

4.1.3 Heir-testator relationship

From verse 17 it is evident that to be a child of God, immediately implies being an heir of God.

4.2 The children of God and God the Son

4.2.1 The role of the Son of God in the believers' adoption as children

In Romans 8 there is no explicit connection between the Son of God and the believers as children of God. The connection exists by implication, and therefore it is possible to determine the role of the Son of God in the believers' adoption as children in Romans 8.

In verse 32 Paul says that God did not keep back his Son, but that he gave up his Son because of us. Therefore we can be assured that with his Son he will give us all things freely. In verse 34 it is stated that Christ pleads for us with God. In verse 39 it is evident that God's love for us is that love which is in Christ Jesus. From these three quotations it is evident that Christ is a mediator: He was delivered *because of us* (v.32); He pleads *for us* with God; God's love *for us* is in Christ (v.39).

The connection is actually more evident from the following argumen-
tation: The believers are in Christ (C1.5-7). Christ is the Son of God (C3.7+8 and C32.2+3). Thus we are children of God with Christ; for Christ is the first among many brothers (C29.10+11).

It is thus evident that Christ mediates our adoption as children of God. 12) He provides the right for us to become God's children. 13)

4.2.2 Children of God and people conformed to the image of Christ

It has already been determined in 4.1.1 that people who are summi- phous tēs eikónos tou huiou, are themselves huioi theou. To be conformed to the image of Christ, therefore, is to be a child of God.

4.2.3 Indwelling in Christ and sonship

Verse 1 states very clearly that there is no condemnation for those in Christ. Thus, it is impossible to be a child of God, without being incorporated in Christ. It is actually because of our incorporation in Christ that we are co-heirs with him (C17.5+6), that we suffer with him (C17.9) and that we are glorified with him (C17.10). 14)

4.2.4 Indwelling by Christ (in us) and sonship

Verse 10 states that Christ lives in us (C10.1-4). The result is that our body is going to die, just as Christ's body became a corpse. The reason for our body's death is sin and the sinful era in which we live. But because God condemned sin in Christ's body (C3.7-16), and because he has thus put us right with himself (C10.10), we taste something of the coming era already in this sinful era: our spirit lives (C10.8+9).

Thus the fact that Christ lives in the believer has the following two results: Because of the sinful era our body is going to die, but - because of the righteousness which Christ obtained - our spirit now lives. 15) (Cf. heading 5).

4.2.5 Christ as heir of God and the children of God as his co-heirs

The fact that God made us his children and that Christ is therefore the first among many brothers (C29.10-12), implies that we are also heirs of God, and therefore co-heirs with Christ (C17.1-8).
4.3 The children of God and God the Holy Spirit

4.3.1 The Holy Spirit's role in the believers adoption as children

God will quicken the mortal bodies of the believers (Cl1.8-13). This he does by means of his Spirit, who lives in the believers (Cl1.14-17). The quickening of the believers' mortal bodies is the setting free of the body, and this is the revealing of the adoption as children (C23.10-14). The role of the Holy Spirit in the believers' adoption as children is therefore that God makes people his children by means of (dià, C11.14a) the Holy Spirit.

In verse 15 pneûma is connected with huiothesia in a genitive construction: pneûma huiothesias (C15.7+8). Under 4.1.1 it has been pointed out that God (the Father) makes people his children; the Holy Spirit is the means by which God does it (C11.14-17).16) C15.6-8 therefore has as English equivalent, '... but you have already received the Spirit by whom God makes you his children'.

4.3.2 The indwelling of the Spirit and the guidance of the Spirit

It is stated as a fact in Romans 8 that the Spirit lives in the believers: C11.3-7, C9.6-9, C11.14-17. However, it is nowhere stated explicitly what the grounds for the Spirit's indwelling in the believers are. The following argumentation makes these grounds evident:

From verse 9 it becomes evident that, because the Spirit of God lives in the believer (C9.6-9), such a believer is en pneûmati (C9.4+5). To be en pneûmati is to let yourself be controlled by the Spirit of God (= tô phrônēma tou pneûmatos, C6.5+6 = phronousin tâ tou pneûmatos, C5.9+10 = peripatoûsin katâ pneûma, (C4.5+7). To allow yourself to be led by the Spirit of God (C14.1-5), is to show evidence that you are a child of God (C14.6-8).

It is a sign of sonship to be led by the Spirit of God (C14.1-5). This guidance of the Spirit, however, is only possible if you are in the Spirit (C9.4+5). This indwelling in the Spirit is only possible if the Spirit lives in you (C9.6-9). Indwelling by the Spirit is therefore eventually the evidence of sonship. Under 4.2.1 it became evident that adoption as children is mediated by Christ. Christ therefore mediates also the indwelling and eventually the guidance of the Spirit, and Christ is the ground of the Spirit's indwelling and guidance.

From this it is evident that the concept children of God is in Romans 8 primarily a soteriological and not an ethical concept. The believer is assured that, because of his incorporation in Christ
(C1.6+7), the Spirit of God lives in him, and that he therefore lives under the guidance of the Spirit (C9.4-9). Because the believer himself cannot contribute anything to his incorporation in Christ, he cannot contribute anything to bring about the indwelling or the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Children of God, however, also have an ethical dimension. Because the believer is a child of God, and because a child of God is led by the Spirit of God, it is imperative that the believer gives evidence of his sonship by allowing himself to be led\(^17\) by the Spirit of God (v.14).

4.3.3 The Spirit's evidence concerning the believer's sonship

In verse 16 it is stated that the Spirit Himself confirms that we are children of God. Because verse 16 continues the line of thought of verses 14, 15, it is clear that the evidence of the Spirit is given in the believer's prayer life (C26.6-15) especially because the Spirit lets the believer address God intimately, personally and trustfully as 'abba!'\(^18\)

4.3.4 The role of the Spirit in the child of God's persevering expectancy of the \textit{huiothesia}

Although the believer is a child of God already in this era, he still expects the \textit{huiothesia}, the revealing of his adoption as a child of God. In this time of expectancy the Spirit plays a very important role, for the Spirit is the child of God's \textit{aparchē} (C23.3-7), the first of God's gifts to his children. This gift serves as a guarantee that the children will receive everything God has promised (Cf. Eph 1:14 and 2 Cor 5:5, see especially the TEV).

The most important role which the Spirit plays concerning the children of God in this era, is that he helps them in their weakness (C26.1-5), namely that they do not know how and what they ought to pray (C26.6-10). The Spirit helps the children of God in that he pleads with God for them in groans that are not expressed in words (C26.11-15). The contents of these groans are the same as those of the creation and of the children of God, namely a call for the dawning of the \textit{huiothesia}, the day of the setting free of the body, when God will reveal who his children are by quickening their mortal bodies.\(^19\)

The Spirit therefore, calls for the completion of everything, with the children of God, as well as on their behalf.

4.3.5 The Spirit and child of God's prayer life
The sinful era in which the children of God now live affects the child of God most deeply, namely in his prayer (v.26) (Nygren 1949:336). The Spirit, however, supports the child of God in this weakness (C26.1-5): He prays with and on behalf of the child of God with groans that are not expressed in words (C26.11-15). Because the Spirit is God, he pleads for the believers in accordance with the will of God (C27.7-9) and thus there is the assurance that such a prayer will be answered.20) 

The child of God's intimate personal childlike relationship with God as his Father comes to the fore most strongly in prayer, in that the Spirit lets the believer address God as 'abba' (C15.10-12).21) 

5. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL ASPECT: THE ALREADY AND THE NOT YET OF BEING CHILD OF GOD

5.1 The children of God are also heirs of God

The fact that the children of God are also called heirs of God in verse 17, makes it evident that being a child of God involves both an already as well as a not yet. The child of God is already an heir, but he does not yet have the inheritance. The content of the inheritance is that we will be glorified with Christ (C17.10). The not yet is therefore the glorification.

5.2 The present suffering of the children of God and their future glory

The children of God are also his heirs and therefore co-heirs with Christ (C17.1-8), because they suffer with Christ22) (C17-9+10). Heirdom with Christ, however, gives perspective to the present suffering (cf. the interpretation of the connection between verse 17 and verse 18 in the thought structure analysis under 3.2). Suffering with Christ results in being glorified with him.23) The perspective which the heirdom gives, is the glory which will be revealed to the children of God (C18.7-9).

The child of God's prospect on the not yet therefore gives him perspective to acknowledge that the suffering in the present condemned era is worth the trouble. Bruce (1969:168) states correctly that the glory is not only compensation for the suffering; it grows out of the suffering. There is an organic relationship between the two.

5.3 The creation's expectation of the apokalupsin tôn huïōn tou theou
In verse 19 God reveals through Paul that the creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal who his children are (C19.1-6). The reason for the creation's eager longing is the fact that the creation was condemned to forfeit its purpose (C20.1-3). The condemned creation, however, has a prospect, a definite expectation (C20.6), and the context of this expectation is that the creation itself will also be freed (cf. the syntactic structural analysis: C21.1-9 is adjectival to C20.6).

The reason why the creation longs for the revealing of the children of God (which means that their bodies will be glorified), is that the creation itself also will be then recreated (C21.1-9). From this it is apparent that the revealing of the children of God will only take place together with the general fulfilment. When the children of God have been glorified (C21.6-8, cf. C17.10 read with Col 3:4; Phlp 3:21; 2 Cor 4:14; 2 Tm 2:11; Rm 6:5; Col 1:27), that is, when their bodies have been quickened, they will be free from decay (C21.6). It is for this freedom that the creation is recreated (C21.1b+6).

The creation's eager longing that God will reveal his children is a reassurance to the children of God that God is actually going to fulfil the not yet, yes, that he will resurrect our bodies.

5.4 The expectation of the children of God of the huiothesia

5.4.1 The huiothesia means that mortal bodies are quickened

In verse 23 it is stated that the believers wait for the adoption as God's children (huiothesia) (C23.10+11). It is therefore evident that the huiothesia lies in waiting in the future. The huiothesia is God's revealing of our adoption as his children. This revealing of the adoption as children means that God sets our bodies free (C23.10-14). From this it is evident that the not yet of the sonship pertains to the fact that our bodies are still going to die (C10.5+6). The child of God, however, has the promise that God will quicken his mortal body also by the Spirit who lives in God's children.

5.4.2 Certainty concerning the huiothesia, and the appropriation of the huiothesia

The fact of the eschatological element in huiothesia should not leave the child of God in doubt as to the reality of the huiothesia, or his partaking thereof. The connection between verse 23 and verse 24 - if interpreted correctly - sheds light on this matter.

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One who expects the *huiothēsia*, expects something not seen, because the resurrection of the body lies in the future. The children of God, however, expect it with certainty (*apekdechōmenoi*). The beginning of verse 24 states the reason why the *huiothēsia* can be expected with certainty. The reason is that the child of God - while he now only hopes for it - was actually saved in the past. Therefore, as the child of God hopes with certainty that God has saved him (the aorist indicative of C24.2b shows that it cannot be doubted that we *have been saved* in the past), likewise he hopes with certainty in the *huiothēsia*, that is the setting free of his body.

In verse 25 Paul summarizes this whole argument: It is actually because of this that the children are persistent in their expectation of the *huiothēsia*. They have a hope (*elpis*) pertaining to that which they have not seen. Their hope pertaining to their fulfilled salvation - which they also do not see - acts as the basis and stimulus for their hope pertaining to their *huiothēsia*, that is the setting free of their bodies.

In 5.2 it has been argued that the resurrection of the body and the glorification of the children of God are synonymous. The certainty of the glorification is evident in two ways: The children of God are glorified with Christ (C17-10); there is no reason to doubt Christ's glory. Furthermore, the fact that God leads Paul to write about the glorification in the aorist (C30.12), makes it evident that there is no doubt about the glorification.

The certainty, however, is most evident from verse 28: For those who love God, that is for those he has called according to his purpose, God lets all things work for good. The child of God therefore has all the certainty of his complete sonship.

5.4.3 Summary

That which the children of God have already received, gives them perspective while they wait for the completion of the *not yet*.

The great *already* is that they are saved in Christ: This means that in Christ they already have life (C10.8-10), and that they have the Spirit as first gift (C23.3-7). In short: God has already made them his children. The only thing that still lies in the future - the *not yet* - is that God will reveal their sonship by quickening their mortal bodies also (C11.2-13).

5.5 The Spirit's groaning in expectation of the fulfilment
In verse 26 Paul states that the Spirit also groans, in the same way as the creation and the children of God groan in expectation of the fulfilment (C26.1). The Spirit pleads with groans which are not expressed in words. (Cf. 4.3.4, where the content of the groans have been discussed.

6. THE CHILDREN OF GOD - COMPLETE CONQUERORS

Paul ends verse 30 with the climactic statement: 'Those whom God has declared just, he has also glorified!' So sure are the children of God of their glorification that Paul writes about it in the aorist indicative. Therefore Paul breaks out in the song of verses 31-39: The children of God are complete conquerors, because God loves them in Christ.

7. THE CHILDREN OF GOD IN ROMANS 8 AND THE EXPOUNDING OF THE GOSPEL

The result of the research concerning the children of God in Romans 8 is fruitful for the expounding of the Gospel. This fruitfulness is designated for two facets, namely pastoral work and preaching.

7.1 Pastoral work

The meaning of the concept children of God in Romans 8 is very useful for pastoral counselling. Only a few examples are touched upon.

7.1.1 The believer with a guilt complex

God has made you his child. With his blood Christ has gained the right from God for you to be his child. God gives his Spirit to live in you; he thus makes you worthy of your sonship.

7.1.2 The believer who is cold and rationalistic

God is not a distant ruler. He has made you his child and you now live in an intimate personal child-father relationship with him. In this relationship you can and must know him with childlike openness as your heavenly 'Dad'.

7.1.3 The believer who is afraid of God

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You are not the slave of a distant angry Master. If you are not in Christ, God is distant and angry, but in Christ, God has made you his child; God has now become your 'Dad' in heaven. You therefore have the right to speak to your heavenly Father as a small child speaks to his dad.

7.1.4 The believer who isolates himself and does not enter in fellowship with his fellow-believers

God has made all believers his children. All of them therefore have the same 'Dad'—God, their heavenly Father. Because of this they are each other's brothers and sisters. Believers are therefore tied together by a very strong family cord. If you are truly a believer, you are a child of God, and therefore your fellow-believers are your brothers and sisters. If this intimate cord does not become evident in your life, you yourself place a question mark over your child-father relationship with God.

7.1.5 The believer who is burdened by negative environmental or hereditary factors

God has become your Father in heaven. This does not cancel your natural relationship with your ancestors, neither does it at once cancel environmental factors which determined the shaping of your personality. But, because God has made you his child, you now have—without cancelling your natural descent—a divine descent. You have been born again, of God. Now your sinful nature no longer rules over you, but you live under the merciful guidance of God's Spirit, who lives in you because God has made you his child.

7.1.6 The believer who bluffs himself with 'the weakness of the flesh'

God's Spirit lives in his children. Therefore they are no longer controlled by their sinful nature, for they are under the liberating command of God's Spirit. Be led by God's Spirit, and give evidence in this way that you also are a child of God.

7.1.7 The believer with extreme anxiety over his future

God has made you his child. To accomplish this, his Son had to give his blood. Therefore you are precious to him, and he loves you. Being your Father in heaven he lets all things work towards your well-being. Therefore you can live assured that whatever the future has in store for you ..., in his fatherly love God uses
it all to your benefit.

7.2 Preaching

The following is a sketch for the preaching of Romans 8 with verse 14 as nuclear verse. The numbering in the left column refers to the particular verses in Romans 8.

Theme: Be led by the Spirit of God and give evidence in this way that you are child and therefore heir of God.

1. Introduction

2. We ARE children of God (the indicative of our salvation)

1-4 2.1 We are in Christ
9, 10 2.2 Christ is in us
2.3 Conclusion: We are children of God, and therefore we are liberated from our sinful nature, and re-instated under the life-giving guidance of God's Spirit, because Christ is in us and we are in him.

3. Be led by the Spirit of God (the imperative of our salvation)

14 3.1 Being led by God's Spirit is evidence of your sonship
5-8, 12-15 3.2 What it entails to be led by the Spirit of God
3.3 The reason why being led by the Spirit is evidence of sonship

15 1) The Spirit makes us God's children
16 2) The Spirit acclaims our evidence that we are God's children
15 3) The Spirit lets us address God as 'abba'

4. We are heirs of God (the expectancy of our salvation)

17 4.1 Because we are children, we are also heirs
10, 11 4.2 The already and the not yet explicated
23 1) In Christ we already live, but our bodies are going to die
23f, 26f 2) We already have the Spirit as first Gift, but we are waiting for the full sum (i.e. the other gifts)
4.3 The already gives us perspective in our expectancy of the fulfilment of the not yet.
28-30  4.4 We wait for our inheritance with endurance and an eager longing

5. In conclusion

31-39  5.1 With Paul we break out in a song of victory: We are total conquerors because God loves us in Christ

Theme  5.2 Final appeal based on the indicative of our salvation: 'Be led by the Spirit of God! Give evidence in this way that you are child and therefore heir of God'.

8. CONCLUSION

* Children of God is not in the first place a corporative concept, but it especially pertains to the individual believer.

* God makes people his children by calling them to be conformed to the image of his Son. God therefore adopts people as his children (Cf. 4.1.1).

* By nature man lives in a slave-master relationship to God. However, when God makes people his children, God creates an intimate child-father relationship (Cf. 4.1.2).

* By virtue of this intimate personal child-father relationship which God creates, the child of God addresses his heavenly Father intimately, personally and openly as 'abba' (Dad, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 4.1.2).

* The adoption as children of God is mediated by Christ. He earns the right for us to become children of God, and gives this right to people (Cf. 4.2.1).

* It is impossible to be a child of God without being incorporated in Christ (Cf. 4.2.3).

* Christ lives in the children of God (Cf. 4.2.4).

* People whom God makes his children, become conformed to the image of his Son (Cf. 4.2.2).

* Among the children of God Christ is the first among many brothers. Christ is heir, likewise the children of God - as Christ's brothers - are also heirs (Cf. 4.2.5).

* God makes people his children by means of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 4.3.1).
* Christ mediates the indwelling and therefore, consequently the guidance of the Spirit also (Cf. 4.3.2).

* The term *children of God* has soteriological and not only ethical implications: When a believer allows the Spirit of God to lead him, he gives evidence that God has made him his child (Cf. 4.3.2).

* The Holy Spirit endorses the believer's testimony that he is a child of God; this endorsement is demonstrated in the believer's prayer life, and is especially evident in the address *'abba'* (Cf. 4.3.3).

* The Holy Spirit prays with and on behalf of the children of God with groans which are not expressed in words (Cf. 4.3.5).

* The content of the Holy Spirit's groans is a call for the arrival of the *huirothesía* (Cf. 4.3.4).

* The Holy Spirit is the first gift to the children of God and the Holy Spirit also serves as guarantee that they will receive the other things that God has promised (Cf. 4.3.4).

* The children of God have not yet received everything. This is evident from the fact that they are not only children of God, but also heirs of God (Cf. 5.1).

* The children of God's heirdom with Christ gives them perspective in their suffering in the present sinful age, because the result of their suffering with Christ is that they are also glorified with him (Cf. 5.2).

* The glorification of the children of God entails that God quickens their mortal bodies (Cf. 5.4.1).

* Only when the bodies of the children of God are resurrected, is their adoption as children complete; then and thereby God reveals that he has adopted them as his children (Cf. 5.4.1).

* This eschatological element in the adoption as children should not leave the children of God in doubt as to the reality of their adoption or their partaking in it. Their firm hope of their completed salvation in Christ serves as basis for their firm hope concerning the completion of their adoption as children, that is the resurrection of their bodies (Cf. 5.4.2).

* This entails the following: What the children of God have already received from their Father, gives them perspective in their eager awaiting of the fulfilment of the not yet (Cf. 5.4.3).
* A further assurance for the children of God that the not yet will definitely be fulfilled, is the creation's eager longing for God's revealing of his children (Cf. 5.3).

* In their awaiting of the fulfilment, the children of God not only have the support of the creation's eager longing, but also that of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 5.5).

* After doing research on Romans 8 every child of God breaks out in a song of joy and victory with Paul:

'We are total conquerors, because God loves us in Christ!'

FOOTNOTES

1. Determined with the concordance of Moulton & Geden (1974).

2. Huirothesia does not occur in the Septuagint or other Greek versions of the Old Testament, including the apocryphal books, and is not used by any Greek author prior to the Christian era (Moulton & Geden 1974:966).

3. Summorphos and summorphizomai do not occur in the LXX or other Greek versions of the Old Testament, including the apocryphal books. Summorphizomai is not used by any Greek author prior to the Christian era.

4. God is very often designated in the New Testament as Father of the believers. The use of the word paîer with this meaning by Paul only is illustrated by the reference above. Paul uses this word often enough to determine his usage of the word.

5. The only other place where God is addressed as abba, is by Jesus himself, in Mark 14:36.

6. The closest equivalent in Paul is in Galatians 4:28f (tōn kaiā pneūma gennēthēnta).

7. It is remarkable that the phrase ek theou with the meaning ek theou egennēthēsan only occurs in the Johannine writings.


9. This phrase also occurs in Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 1:5; 5:5, but it is a quotation from Psalm 2:7.

10. In Ephesians 1:5 God is explicitly called the adopter.

11. This is in accordance with John's phrase born of God (ek theou egennēthēsan, Jn 1:13), or as the TEV translates: '... God himself was their Father'.

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In Galatians 4:4f Paul states it more explicitly: 'God sent his Son ... to redeem those who live under the law, so that we might become God's sons'.

This accords with John's phrase in John 1:12: ...ēdōken autois exousian tékna theou genēsthai.

Indwelling in Christ and incorporation into Christ are explicated by Paul in the following places: Colossians 3:3f, Romans 6:5 and 2 Corinthians 4:14.

2 Corinthians 4:10 (TEV: At all times we carry in our mortal bodies the death of Jesus, so that his life also may be seen in our bodies) accords with this interpretation of Romans 8:10.

Barrett (1957:160) puts it explicitly: '... not the Spirit which effects the adoption, but the Spirit which anticipates adoption'.


This is also the view of Van Leeuwen & Jacobs (1932:149) and Jager, (s.a.:148).

Cf. Nygren (1949:336). That these are the contents of the Spirit's groans can also be deduced from the root relationship between C26.14, C22.26 and C23.2b.

Lekkerkerker (1974:351) states correctly in this connection that the hearing and answering of a prayer is something that happens between the Father and the Spirit, as reconciliation happens between the Father and the Son.

Cf. Footnote 17. Cf. also 4.1.2.

Also Cranfield (1975:407) and Louw (1979b:1-17) see C17.9 as a causal clause.

The following scholars interpret the being glorified together as the purpose of the suffering together (i.e. not as the result): Newman & Nida (1973:155), Jonker (1969:120), Ridderbos (1959:183) and Murray (1960:293). This interpretation, however, does not take the context fully into consideration.

Nygren (1949:331-2) correctly states that the creation became condemned because of man, and therefore it is reinstated with man.

The 1979 - Afrikaans translation incorrectly translates C23.12-14 with 'Hy sal ons van die verganklikheid bevry (He will set

26. None of the consulted scholars really interprets the connection between verse 23 and verse 24. The only ones who explicitly take connection into consideration, are Cranfield and Ridderbos. Cranfield (1975:4:9) is very vague; he says that C24.1 is 'a modal dative serving to qualify esōthēmen'. Ridderbos is more explicit, and it is evident that he regards C24.1 as a causal adverbial clause. He says the following, 'However much salvation is still a matter of hope, in that we have already been saved' (1975:249). Elsewhere (1959:189) he says, '... doordat wij grond voor de hoop ontvangen, dáárom werden wij behouden'. This interpretation, however, does not fully take the context into consideration.

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