

**THE OTHER INTERCESSOR: THE HOLY
SPIRIT AS *FAMILIA*-PETITIONER FOR
THE FATHER'S *FILIUSFAMILIA*
IN ROMANS 8:26-27**

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Introduction

The role of the Holy Spirit and its interaction with the Father, Jesus, and humanity within Rom 8 has been approached from a number of perspectives, and there have been a plethora of theological approaches to Rom 6-8. More recently, however, a number of scholars have focused on the social-science or historical approaches to the content and metaphor of these chapters, and, in regard to Rom 8, have concentrated on the family or household relationship established through adoption.

James M. Scott has grappled with the theology of adoption as sons of God, but places the language of slavery and adoption in Romans in a Jewish and OT context. He asserts that the usage of slave and adoption language is parallel to Gal 4 and is based upon an Exodus motif and 2 Sam 7:14. He relegates the role of the Holy Spirit in Rom 8 to that of present guarantee and means of future adoption and inheritance of believers of Christ's presence with God at the resurrection from the dead.¹

Recent work on slavery as reality and metaphor in the NT by Jennifer Glancey has been helpful in understanding slave manumission and adoption in a Greco-Roman context.² However, she examines the imagery of slavery, manumission, and adoption in relation to Gal 4 and does not consider it in relation to Rom 6-8. Additionally, James C. Walters's recent article rejects Scott's conclusion on adoption and inheritance in Romans, returning its consideration to a Greco-Roman context. He notes the close association of the Spirit within the adoption and inheritance process, but does not further explore its involvement.³

Stanley Stowers elucidates the perspective of Greco-Roman social relations involving slavery, kinship, and family relationships. His emphasis

¹James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 221-266, 241-244, 244-247, 250, 259.

²Jennifer A. Glancey, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 33-37, 92-96.

³James C. Walters, "Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2003), 42-76.

on *familia* relations expands our understanding of Romans. However, he does not fully scrutinize what I term a "*familia*-relations" reading of Romans, particularly chapter 8, nor the role of the Holy Spirit in this context.⁴

Philip Esler rightly notes that Rom 8 celebrates a new identity, which he terms "in-Christ," and places the concepts of adoption and inheritance in a Greco-Roman context. He points to kinship and household imagery as the appropriate Greco-Roman models for interpreting Rom 8:12-17, but does not consider the implications of such a reading at that point. Additionally, he makes the role of the Spirit the avenue by which charismatic gifts are given to believers to authenticate their experience with God, seemingly echoed in the Spirit's inarticulate groans in 8:26-27, "in which God expresses solidarity with his people."⁵

On the other hand, Reidar Aasgard has taken a dim view of the family-of-God motif, arguing the link between Christ and the adopted sons of God in Rom 8 is tenuous as a formalized relationship. Yet Aasgard does not totally deny a relationship between Christ and his "siblings."⁶

Finally, Awilda Gonzalez-Tejera examines the issue of intercession in the Paulines from a perspective of Greco-Roman patron-client relations and friendship. She treats Rom 8:26-27 as a Pauline use of consolatory tradition, recognizing the Spirit's involvement in enabling humanity to endure the present age. Also, she mingles the imagery of adopted children in Rom 8 with slavery to God in Rom 6, yet concludes that the Spirit in this passage is an interior connection with God that represents present intimacy with the divine, assures full adoption, and serves as a guarantor of future glory.⁷

In my opinion, there seems to be a set of issues to be considered in Rom 6-8 in relation to a *familia*-relations reading of Rom 8, and also a need to comprehend the intercession of the Spirit in 8:26-27. I would suggest, therefore, that a *familia*-relations reading of Rom 8, especially 8:26-27, is valuable for understanding Paul's teaching regarding the role of the Holy Spirit and its intercession.

⁴Stanley Kent Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 256-257, 280-284.

⁵Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 243-267, 246-249, 264-265.

⁶Reidar Aasgard, "My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!" *Christian Siblingship in Paul* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 137-150, 144-147.

⁷Awilda Gonzalez-Tejera, "Intercession in Paul's Letters in Light of Graeco-Roman Practices of Intercession" (Th.D. dissertation, Boston University School of Theology, 2002), 143-170.

In this article, I will briefly summarize aspects of Roman *familia* relationships, including slavery, manumission, adoption, father-son and brothers relationships, and inheritance. Next I will briefly scan the use of *familia*-relations language in Rom 1-7 and 8:1-25. I will then assess the unique role of the Holy Spirit in 8:26-27 in light of a *familia*-relations reading. In conclusion, I will propose how this reading may impact the theological meaning of Paul's message to the Roman Christians, especially in relation to Rom 8:24 and Christ's "intercession."

Familia Relationships in the Greco-Roman World

Greco-Roman *familia* relationships included interactions among all those residing within a household (*domus*), including father, immediate family, and slaves.⁸ Slavery was defined by Roman law as *servus*, a condition in Roman philosophy contrary to the "natural state" of humanity, which was liberty (*libertus*). Thus enslavement was considered a living death.⁹ Under *servus* law, the slave owner had absolute power (*dominium*) over the slave, who was considered part of the extended household possessions.¹⁰ Slaves were considered not only property or objects, but tools for fulfilling their owner's desires and accomplishing household needs.¹¹ The owner had the power of punishment; beating, whipping, branding, and even death were methods for punishing a slave, often swiftly and severely carried out by masters for the most minor infractions.¹² Thus slaves usually lived in regular fear of punishment for offending their owners. Most Roman slaves were freed only by death and considered it a form of "divine" release.¹³

Manumissio ("manumission") was the legal process of freeing a slave. The master generally brought the deserving slave to a priest, magistrate, provincial governor, or emperor, who, with the owner, pronounced the

⁸Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 74-101, esp. 85-88. For prior understandings of *familia* and *domus*, see Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 1-17, 24-35.

⁹W. W. Buckland, *A Text-Book of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 72. See also R. W. Leage, *Roman Private Law*, 3d ed. (London: MacMillan, 1964), 65; Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies in Roman History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1:121-122.

¹⁰George Long, "Dominium," *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, ed. William Smith (London: John Murray, 1875), 421-423.

¹¹William Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4-8. See also Hopkins, 1:123.

¹²Hopkins, 1:119-120. See also Fitzgerald, 32-41; Dixon, *Roman Family*, 154-155.

¹³Hopkins, 1:118.

slave's freedom. The process was confirmed in a witnessed formal statement.¹⁴

A slave generally attained freedom by paying the purchase price for his or her own release. However, the master could also free a slave through an agent acting on the slave's behalf.¹⁵ Finally, manumission could be gained by freeing a slave as part of the terms of a will and its acceptance by the *heres* ("inheritors"). In this case, the slave remained in the service of his or her master until the death of the owner, but in some ways was treated as free.¹⁶ A slave could even become an inheritor, but only if freedom was attained before accepting the inheritance.¹⁷

Manumission not only brought freedom to the released slave, but also a form of Roman citizenship, if the former owner was a Roman citizen,¹⁸ by establishing between them a new relationship analogous to father and son.¹⁹ The former owner became *patronus* of the manumitted slave.²⁰ The slave took the name of the former owner, becoming through the name a symbolic part of the former owner's *gens* or lineage, but not part of the *familia*.²¹

Manumission was generally seen as an act of generosity, performed by a master for a slave. In return, gratitude (*χάρις*) was expressed by the slave for this act.²² The *libertus* ("freed slave") owed respect, praise, and thanksgiving to his former master. This obligation of praising the patron's benefaction also extended to the freedman praising the patron's children. Refusal by the freedman to show honor and thanksgiving for

¹⁴Jane F. Gardner and Thomas Wiedemann, *The Roman Household* (London: Routledge, 1991), 144-145, 158-159. See also A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 327-328; Henry Thurston Peck, ed., "Manumissio," *Harpers Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (New York, Harper, 1898); Buckland, 72-73.

¹⁵Gardner and Wiedemann, 147.

¹⁶Leage, 79-83; Buckland, 74-77.

¹⁷Buckland, 86.

¹⁸Roman citizenship took a number of forms depending on a variety of factors such as the age of the slave, place of manumission, and status of the owner, resulting usually in *civitas* or *latini*. See E. G. Hardy, *Roman Laws and Charters* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), 70-71. The Greeks considered the Roman idea of granting citizenship and status to a freed slave as remarkable. It is not known how often slaves were freed in Roman society; some assume it may not have been an infrequent event. See Fitzgerald, 87-88.

¹⁹Beryl Rawson, "The Roman Family," in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 12-13. Also see Gardner and Wiedemann, 40-41.

²⁰Gardner and Wiedemann, 166.

²¹Long, "Manumissio," 730-731.

²²Gardner and Wiedemann, 162-163; and Hopkins, 1:117-118, 129.

the patron's benefaction left the freedman liable for being charged with ingratitude (*libertus impious*, as one being deficient in piety [*pietas*]).²³ As a result, the freedman could be banished from Rome, possibly returned to slavery,²⁴ or publicly prosecuted for impiety.²⁵

It was expected that the patron would support his freed slave in case of necessity. If a patron failed to do so, he lost patronal rights. In turn, the freedman was obligated to the patron who manumitted him, which included providing services, such as managing his patron's affairs, tutoring his children, and extending material or financial support if the patron was in need. Thus the freed slave was to perform legal (*officiales*) expectations by publicly and privately demonstrating respect and affection toward the *patronus* as the common terms of manumission. The freedman who did not meet his obligations was seen as *ingratus*, a punishable offense under Roman law.²⁶

Another form of manumission practiced predominately in Hellenistic areas of the Roman Empire, such as at Delphi and Thessaly, was *paramone*. This type of manumission involved a conditional release in which the price had been paid, but the release was not yet realized. Keith Hopkins describes *paramone* as a form of conditional manumission in which "slave[s] bought formal freedom but contractually bound themselves to stay with and to continue serving their former owners even after they were freed, just as though they were still slaves, usually until their former owner's death."²⁷

Paramone manumission included a religious ceremony, complete with witnesses and guarantors, in which the master set the slave free before the god Apollo. In the transaction, the master sold the slave to Apollo. In light of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, it is of particular interest that in these agreements the slaves were termed "bodies" (*σώματα*). The slave paid the sale price to the god on behalf of the master. The sale carried conditions of continuing service as a slave to the former master. The slave was given a copy of the public manumission record to substantiate his or her freedom.²⁸ The god Apollo, seller, and guarantors

²³Alan Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 17. See also Hardy, 84-86 and nn. 6-9.

²⁴Tranquillus C. Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, trans. Alexander Thomson, rev. ed., ed. T. Forrester (London: Bell, 1909), 316-317.

²⁵Hopkins, 1:130.

²⁶Gardner and Wiedemann, 152-158. See also Watson, 39-43; Long, "Patronus," 878-880.

²⁷Hopkins, 1:133-171, esp. 133.

²⁸Ibid., 1:138.

were witnesses that the freedom would be honored.²⁹

Socially, the slaves were conditionally freed—although freedom from slavery was proclaimed, they were bound to Apollo, who in turn was to set them free at the end of their service to their master. Thus the slave continued in service while already freed, still living under the command and domination of the former master's desires and needs and receiving punishment, including beating, chaining, and, in some cases, reselling to a new master, which would void the sale to the god. For early release, a third party could pay an additional price for full freedom.³⁰

Apollo affirmed and maintained the slave's future freedom. According to Hopkins, the god Apollo was believed to have ultimate power in guaranteeing the slave's freedom, thus binding the parties to honor the transaction, even in the case of a slave giving up his or her manumission document to the former master. In that particular case, Apollo punished the slave for violating the manumission agreement.³¹

Some masters made their conditionally released slaves their children and heirs, which was likely based on caring and affection for the slave.³² In a minority of cases from Delphi, the slave's conditional freedom was purchased by a party other than the former owner, and the slave would then serve the purchaser until the conditions of release were fulfilled,³³ a somewhat similar case to Paul's example in Rom 5-8.

Adoption (*adoptio*) was a Roman legal process whereby one acquired sons and added to the *familia* through the creation of fictive kinships.³⁴ *Adoptio* legally bound the adoptee as fictive full flesh and blood of the father (*pater*).³⁵ He acquired the father's name, social status, and, most importantly, as *filiusfamilia* ("son"), became inheritor (*heres*) of the father's household, thereby keeping the family lineage from dying out.³⁶ It was possible for adoptive sons to be absent from the *adoptio* ceremony, according to Roman law.³⁷ Also, multiple sons could be adopted by the same father.³⁸ Slaves could be adopted by their masters, whereby the

²⁹Ibid., 1:144-145, 152-154.

³⁰Ibid., 1:142-143.

³¹Ibid., 1:145-146.

³²Ibid., 1:167-168; see also Scott, 86.

³³Ibid., 1:168-169.

³⁴Saller, 85. See also Jane F. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 202-203, and Dixon, 112-113.

³⁵Gardner, 117.

³⁶Buckland, 122. Also see Long, "Adoptio," 15-16; and F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 157. For social impact, see Saller, 83-89.

³⁷Gardner, 131.

³⁸Gardner, 139-140, 144-145.

master formally claimed the slave as his son, most likely involving manumission as an interim legal step.³⁹ Slaves who were freed without adoption were viewed as “fatherless.”⁴⁰ Finally, under *adoptio* law, the adopted freedman would be granted rights that were equal to those of natural sons.⁴¹

The adopting father gained *patria potestas* (a father’s power) over the adopted son in the familial relationship, guiding and directing the son’s affairs as he would a natural son.⁴² The father had the power of life and death, the sale into slavery, giving in adoption or in marriage, and of disinheriting his son.⁴³ The adopted or natural son had no inherent dominion or power of his own. Even in adulthood, everything the son did in business, law, or family life was considered gain for the father, adding to his possessions and household.⁴⁴ Only in inheritance did the son gain full rights.⁴⁵

Relationships between fathers and sons as *familia* were usually based on *pietas*, the mutual affectionate devotion, love, and compassion existing between father and sons and other immediately related members.⁴⁶ *Pietas* was also exhibited by creating, displaying, and honoring the *imagines*, stone or wax busts, statues, and figures displayed in Roman households to honor the memories of brothers, sons, or fathers.⁴⁷ Thus, based upon a complex legal and a shared mutual relationship between owner and slave, it was possible for a slave to enter into sonship as a freedman.

Having assessed common social relations in Greco-Roman families, we turn to Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and its language of slavery, implied manumission, and adoption in chapters 1 through 8 and the relationship of this language to the role of the Spirit in Rom 8:26-27.

³⁹Buckland, 127-128. See also Leage, 119-120; and Gardner, 179, 188.

⁴⁰Rawson, 13; and also Gardner, 180, 184-186.

⁴¹Gardner, 184-188.

⁴²Fritz Schulz, *Classical Roman Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 143-144.

⁴³Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 169-170.

⁴⁴Saller, 102-105. See also Fitzgerald, 78.

⁴⁵James D. Hester, *Paul’s Concept of Inheritance: A Contribution to the Understanding of Heilsgeschichte* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968), vii, 15-19. See also Long, “*Patria Potestas*,” 873-875.

⁴⁶Saller, 105-131. See also Gardner, 123-124; and Gardner and Wiedemann, 64-65, 98-110.

⁴⁷Saller, 88, 90-95; Joubert, 170-171; Janette McWilliam, “Children Among the Dead,” in *Childhood, Class and Kin in the Roman World*, ed. Suzanne Dixon (London: Routledge, 2001), 91; and Michele George, “A Roman Funerary Monument with a Mother and Daughter,” in *Childhood, Class and Kin in the Roman World*, 178-187. See also Dixon, 171, plate 8 of statues and busts. Finally, for a full assessment, see Harriett I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999).

*Approaching Romans 1-7: A Familia-
Relations Perspective*

While it may be argued that a social-relations context is the foundation for defining the human relationship with God in Rom 1-8, only a brief overview will be presented in this article. In Rom 1, the Gentiles refused to “acknowledge, glorify or give thanks to God” (vv. 21, 28), which, according to the terms of manumission, would have been recognized as impiety by Paul’s Roman audience. In return, they are “handed over” to sin (1:24, 26, 28), implying a loss of freedom or enslavement to sin for all humanity and liability for punishment (cf. Rom 2:14-16 and 3:19-20).⁴⁸ In Rom 3:21-27, restoration of the relationship comes through God by his free gift of divine benefaction embodied in Christ. God, through Christ’s faithfulness in death, buys back (ἀπολυτρώσεως) as slaves, sin-enslaved humanity into right relationship with him.⁴⁹

In Rom 6, Paul’s discourse utilizes the *familia* language of slavery as its foundation. In 6:1-11, the believer goes through baptism to symbolize death to sin, conjoining himself or herself to Christ in his death and resurrection. The believer’s “death” causes sin to lose its power or dominion over the “body” of the believer. Thus it seems that the term “body,” in this context, refers to an individual as a “slave” and is taken from the legal language of manumission.

In 6:12-18, believers are freed (ἐλευθερωθέντες) from enslavement to sin through “death” with Christ. Enslavement imagery is also used in 6:13, where believers are called to be instruments or tools (ὄπλα) of righteousness,⁵⁰ thus conveying the idea that slaves were often considered tools to carry on the work of their masters. In 6:14-18, the believer moves from being a slave to sin to being a slave to righteousness, implying that God now exercises dominion over the believer and thus expects obedient service on the part of the believer. In 6:19 and 22, the term ἁγιασμόν is often translated “sanctification.” However, the term can also mean “holy dedication to service and loyalty

⁴⁸Stowers, 252.

⁴⁹William Arndt and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (henceforth BDAG), 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 117; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 229-230; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 189-191; John Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (London: SCM, 1989), 111.

⁵⁰J. P. Louw, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 1:53.

to the deity,⁵¹ in this case, to God the Father.⁵² Paul takes the enslavement analogy further when, in 6:22, the believer, defined as someone freed from slavery to sin but enslaved to God, receives the benefit of eternal life. Continuing Paul's theme, 6:23 presents an interesting *familia*-relations reading. The ὀψώνια⁵³ ("soldier's wages," as it is often translated)⁵⁴ is not payment per se, but the Greek equivalent of *peculium*, the subsistence allowance legally owned by the slave master but given to slaves, which they might save to buy their own freedom.⁵⁵ Purchasing one's freedom cost substantial sums, often requiring many years of savings.⁵⁶ In addition, a slave who died before gaining freedom had his *peculium* automatically returned to the master who gave it.⁵⁷ In 6:23, God, as the slave owner, is contrasted with sin's *peculium* by graciously giving the free divine benefaction of eternal life to believers in Christ, which could have been interpreted as an act of supreme love and affection in a Roman household.⁵⁸

In 7:1-6, the theme of dying to the slavery of the law reemerges, seemingly reconfirming the message of 6:1-18, 22. In 7:6, the Christian, having "died" to the law, receives release (κατηργήθημεν)⁵⁹ from slavery to the passions through joining in Christ's death. This release, in a *familia* relations context, is freedom from obligation in enslavement to another party (κατειχόμεθα).⁶⁰ However, the verse also reconfirms slavery (δουλεύειν) to God, who is served in a new, superior, and extraordinary way through the Spirit.

Romans 7:7-13 reconfirms the goodness of the law, yet regresses to demonstrate how the law reveals sin. Beginning with 7:14, Paul moves to a debate occurring in contemporary Greco-Roman moral philosophy,

⁵¹Ibid., 1:537.

⁵²E. Leigh Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosphorus Kingdom* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 144-152.

⁵³Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. and aug. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940).

⁵⁴Anthony J. Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The Purpose, Genre and Audience of Paul's Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 133; James Dunn, *Romans*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988), 1:349.

⁵⁵Ireneus Zeber, *A Study of the Peculium of a Slave in Pre-classical and Classical Roman Law* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1981), 13-17, 24-33, 45-50, 70-71. See also Hopkins, 1:125-126; Ziesler, 171; and Rawson, 17.

⁵⁶Hopkins, 1:118.

⁵⁷Zeber, 84. See also Leage, 71; and Hopkins, 1:128.

⁵⁸Hopkins, 1:127, 132.

⁵⁹BDAG, 417; Schreiner, 350-351.

⁶⁰J. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek New Testament* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997).

as convincingly argued by Stowers, between the law of reason and the desires and passions.⁶¹ The word “sin,” in 7:17, 20, is often understood to be dwelling in the individual; but if the passage is understood from the perspective of *familia* relations, οἰκοῦσα can also be translated “the one having dominion” over the slave.⁶²

Romans 7:23-25 describes sin as being at war with the law and taking the person captive, an action in Roman society which led to slavery, with the captive being legally declared “dead” at the moment of capture.⁶³ Slavery through capture is also suggested as the imagery in 7:24, where the person is described as the “body of death,” and the cry is to be “set free.”

Freedom from the law of sin, in the previously declared enslavement to God in Rom 6, is reaffirmed, in 7:25, in a declaration of praise for what God has done through Christ, a gift to be expanded and clarified in Rom 8.

Approaching Romans 8:1-25: A Familia-Relations Perspective

In Rom 8, Paul continues evoking *familia* imagery to express the interaction of the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit on behalf of believers. Romans 8:2-39 may be divided into four progressive, interrelated responses (8:2-13; 14-25; and 26-27; 28-39) to Paul’s exclamatory *propositio* in 8:1: “There is therefore now no condemnation (κατάκριμα) for those in Christ Jesus,” in which the Holy Spirit’s apparent role is agent of the Father or the Father’s heirs. In this role, the Holy Spirit operates as a *familia* member by completing a desired action in behalf of another *familia* member. In these responses, the Holy Spirit implements the *familia* relations requirements of spiritual manumission and adoption for believers to establish a *filiusfamilia* relationship with the Father. The fourth response demonstrates the role of Christ in the process of spiritual manumission as benefactor to the newly adopted children.

The Spirit as Agent of Manumission: Romans 8:2-13

Paul’s exclamatory *propositio* in 8:1 anticipates his explanation in 8:2-13. While the term κατάκριμα (8:1) is often translated “condemnation,” I would suggest, in the context of a *familia*-relations reading, the

⁶¹Stowers, 260-281.

⁶²H. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1996). See also Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 227-228.

⁶³Watson, 20-22; Leage, 73-75; Buckland, 67; and Dunn, 1:395.

translation “to judge someone as guilty and subject to punishment.” In a *familia* relations reading, punishment would be the master’s response to a disobedient slave, who is still trapped in the service or dominion of sin (7:23-25).⁶⁴ Paul’s *propositio* is that believers in Jesus Christ are now free and clear of punishment, and thus are no longer guilty or awaiting punishment through death as a result of sin.⁶⁵ The first response in 8:2-13, in which the Spirit acts as an agent of manumission by the process of indwelling, amplifies God’s work of freeing believers from slavery to the law (dominion) of sin and death and subsequent entry into Christ’s death and a right relationship with God. In 8:2, Paul states that the “law (dominion) of the Spirit of life has set you free (ἠλευθέρωσέν) from the law (dominion) of sin and death.” Being set free continues the imagery of gaining freedom from slavery to sin.⁶⁶ Paul argues in 8:3 that, through Christ, sin has had a sentence of destruction (κατέκρινεν) passed on it and believers have been exonerated.⁶⁷

In 8:7, those of the flesh have no power to make themselves “subject” (ὑποτάσσεται, better translated “to be under the dominion or mastery” of God),⁶⁸ nor can they “please” (ἀρέσαι; “to please through implied obedient service,” as the root ἀρεσκεία is translated⁶⁹) God (8:8). As observed earlier, obedient service is what a master would expect from his slave.

The indwelling Spirit assures the believer of eternal life in 8:11 due to the restoration of a right relationship with the Father. To this point in Paul’s discourse, the indwelling Spirit is apparently the agent through which the believer becomes enslaved⁷⁰ to God and is thus able to live out the new relationship with the Father made available through Christ’s death and resurrection.⁷¹

Romans 6 argued only for the transfer of slave ownership from sin to God, typified through a Roman ceremony of *mancipium*, the sale and

⁶⁴BDAG, 518.

⁶⁵D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans Chapter 7.1-8.4* (London: Billing, 1981), 258-261. See Schreiner, 398-399.

⁶⁶The verb derives from ἐλευθερία meaning “to set free from control or dominion from an owner, or living as a slave” (Louw, 487 n. 37.133-137.135).

⁶⁷Schreiner, 400-401.

⁶⁸Swanson, n. 57.18.

⁶⁹See ἀρεσκεία and ἀρέσκω in Swanson, n. 742-743.

⁷⁰See Liddell, 1:210.

⁷¹Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 506-508. See also Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 275-276; Schreiner, 353-354.

transfer of goods, property, or slaves through *mancipatio*.⁷² But, in 8:2-13, Paul goes further, for *mancipatio* was also the legal action for granting freedom from slavery. As suggested in 8:2, the believer is set free (ἠλευθέρωσέν) from “the law of sin and death.” Thus the term “obligation of duty” (ὀφειλέται)⁷³ in 8:12 intimates the believer is not enslaved, but a slave given freedom. The Holy Spirit’s agency of indwelling presence makes it possible for humanity to not be in obligation to the flesh, but to God the Father. The state of “being obliged” in Roman society was that of a freedman toward his former master, dramatically different than the state of submission in enslavement.

Thus Rom 8:2-13 explains the Holy Spirit’s role as the agent of *manumissio* in man’s redemption and freedom from slavery to law, sin, and death, granted by God through Christ. The inward presence of the Spirit confirms and empowers the manumission of the believer. This freedom is one of “obligation” for the slave-price paid for freedom from sin and death.⁷⁴

The Spirit as Agent of Adoption: Romans 8:14-25

In 8:14-25, Paul breaks from the enslavement motif of Rom 5–8:13 by transforming the relationship of the believer toward the Father from manumitted slave to endearing *filiusfamilia* through adoption.⁷⁵ He then provides an example as the foundation of Rom 8:14-25, in which the Holy Spirit becomes the agent for adoption into the Father’s *familia*.⁷⁶

⁷²Long, “Mancipium,” 727-728. Also, the slave manumission imagery of Delphi typifies conditional freedom from an old master, in this case sin, and enslavement to the god, in this case the Father.

⁷³BDAG, 598.

⁷⁴As Paul has already described in Rom 5:6-11, where he described reconciliation with God by using the term καταλλάσσω (“to exchange money or items of value”) as the term to define the benefits of Christ’s death. See Liddell, 1: 410; Hester, 60-61, 101-102.

⁷⁵Jane F. Gardner, “Legal Stumbling-Blocks for Lower Class Families in Rome,” in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*, ed. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 41-46. Also see Guerra, 140. The legal practice of manumission by adoption is referred to twice in Roman law, and while there are no examples of its performance in Roman literature, there are slave manumission inscriptions from Delphi (see Gellius, v. 19; and Justinian, *Institutes*, 1 tit. 11s12, and regarding Delphic manumission and adoption see Hopkins, 1:133-171). Also, the Bosporan manumission inscriptions provide insight into service to God in a “synagogue slave” context. See Gibson, 144-150.

⁷⁶While Saller recognizes this progression in Galatians, he does not in Romans, but sees the son/slave motif as substitutive, not progressive (“Sons, Slaves and Christians,” in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*, ed. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver

In 8:14, those being “led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” This phrase is often linked contextually to the OT.⁷⁷ However, I argue that the context of this text is derived from Greco-Roman culture, as presented by Stowers.⁷⁸ In fact, the term υιοθεσία (“adoption”) does not occur in either the LXX or Hellenistic Jewish writings, nor was the practice of adoption officially recognized among the Jews.⁷⁹

In 8:15, Paul proclaims that believers are “sons of God” by the “Spirit of adoption.” Through the Spirit, believers can cry out “Abba, Father,” a term of endearment, respectfully and intimately called out by a child to a father, used even by mature men toward their fathers.⁸⁰ In the context of children of God, the term seems to be the affectionate and intimate address of a child not yet free of paternal protection or direction, living under *patria potestas* as a new son of the Father’s *familia*.⁸¹

In 8:16, the adoption as children of God comes through the witness-bearing (συμμαρτυρεῖ) of the Spirit. The Spirit is portrayed as the agent, who acts as the confirming witness of the adoption. Thus it seems that the Spirit is serving as the *familiae emptor*, who is related to the *pater* and guarantees God’s adoption of sons who are absent from the actual adoptive event.⁸²

Romans 8:17 embodies the crux of Paul’s argument in 8:14-25. Paul argues that if persons are God’s children, then they are joint heirs with Christ. To be an heir and receive inheritance, according to Roman law, one would have to be freed from slavery.⁸³ The *heres* (“inheritance”)—which includes all the gifts and possessions of God the Father, especially resurrection, sonship and glorification—is equally shared by Christ and the newly adopted sons of God. Joint heirship fully engages the imagery of affection, devotion, duty, and *pietas* inherent in Roman

[Oxford: Clarendon, 1997], 105-106). I disagree.

⁷⁷See Hos 1:10 for reference to Israel as “sons of the living God,” and Deut 14:1, where they are titled “children of the Lord your God.” Other NT use is found in John 1:12; 1 John 3:1; and Rev 21:7. 2 Cor 6:18 incorporates similar allusional concepts from 2 Sam 7:14 and Isa 43:6.

⁷⁸See Stowers, 251-253. See also Schreiner, 424-425.

⁷⁹Hester, 11-12, 59. See also F. Lyall, “Roman Law in the Writings of Paul—Adoption,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 458-466; Moo, 501 n. 26, 27.

⁸⁰See “Abba,” *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985). John Ashton, “Abba,” *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

⁸¹E. A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale, 1960), 38. See also Hester, 17-18.

⁸²Hester, 60-61, 101-102. See also *TDNT*, 569 and *BDAG*, 778.

⁸³Watson, 26-27; see also Long, “*Heres*,” 598-602.

social relations of *familia*,⁸⁴ and symbolizes the process of becoming immediate family members (*sui heredes*) of God the Father.⁸⁵

There is, seemingly, only one stipulation in becoming a *heres*: the believer must currently share in Christ's suffering. Whether Paul means by suffering the inclusion in Christ's crucifixion in 6:6, living in a physical body and being separated from inheritance as follows in 8:18-25, or persecution, is not clear. However, if the believer joins in this suffering, he or she has already been glorified, i.e., given the Father's divine honor and praise with Christ (συνδοξασθῶμεν, v. 17). This imagery of sharing Christ's suffering corresponds with Varro's description of inheritance as part of *consortium* (sharing one's lot or fate in life, symbolizing the sharing of brothers in inheritance).⁸⁶ In turn, Paul's audience will share in inheritance—the glorification or honoring of Christ, who is portrayed as seated at the right hand of the Father in 8:34.

In 8:18-25, Paul moves to an argument that the adoption is only partially consummated and awaiting the final fulfillment. In 8:22-23, all creation suffers agony together, awaiting the revelation, i.e., the believer's appearance in the presence of the Father. Paul's linkage between humanity and creation may be similar to Pliny's idea that animals shared the earth in partnership or *consortio*, echoing the ideas of fraternal joint ownership, inheritance, and thereby suffering the same lot or fate.⁸⁷ Having obtained the "adoption or birth certificate" (ἀπαρχήν)⁸⁸ of the Holy Spirit, the believers wait in eager anticipation for the "release from slavery" (ἀπολύτρωσιν) of their bodies.⁸⁹

The Spirit as Agent of Benefaction: Romans 8:26-27

A number of interpretations have been suggested for Rom 8:26-27. E. A. Obeng, writing on the Spirit as intercessor, concluded the idea did not originate in "Judaistic writings." Rather it was the result of Paul's reflections on the Jewish idea that heavenly beings were effective intercessors with God. He also argued that as Jesus was an intercessor

⁸⁴Cynthia J. Bannon, *The Brothers of Romulus: Fraternal Pietas in Roman Law, Literature and Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 9, 12-13.

⁸⁵Ibid., 15-16. See also Varro, *On the Latin Language*, rev. ed., trans. Roland G. Kent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 5.183; *Isid. Orig.* 10.51.

⁸⁶Bannon, 19-20, 25-29.

⁸⁷See *ibid.*, 23-24; and Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 9.1.1.

⁸⁸BDAG, 81.

⁸⁹Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 218-220.

(8:34), so was the Spirit (8:26-27, and based upon the Spirit's advocacy in the Gospels). In discussing the meaning of the Spirit's intercession, Obeng refuted the argument that the Spirit's intercessory "sighing" or "groaning too deep for words" was glossolalic in nature, as argued by Frederic Louis Godet, Hans Lietzmann, and Ernst Käsemann. For Obeng, "groaning" refers to the intensity of prayer, denoting the Spirit's and believers' intense desire for the acceptance of their requests. He supports his understanding through OT evidence. Finally, Obeng argues that Paul presents two equal, cooperative intercessors with God the Father—Christ and the Spirit—who operate in different realms, with one interceding at the right hand of God and the other within humanity.⁹⁰

Julie L. Wu argues that the Spirit's intercession comes so that believers can be comforted in praying according to the will of God in the midst of present sufferings. She argues that Paul draws on the image of Christ in Gethsemane as part of becoming conformed to the likeness of Christ in 8:29.⁹¹

Ziesler concludes that "our weakness" in 8:26 concerns the believer's "not yet" situation and the Spirit's willingness to help the believer to know "what to pray for." The Spirit is "praying on our behalf" in "unspeakable groans." In 8:27, he emphasizes that God knows his Spirit; thus his will is being fulfilled in the Spirit's prayer on behalf of those who belong to Christ.⁹²

Dunn follows much of Ziesler's thought, but adds that humanity does not know how to pray "as is proper," thus supporting the idea that believers do not know what to "pray for" due to the weakness of the believer's current state. He supports the "Judaistic" and scriptural motif for the Spirit's intercession as consecutively opposed and favored by Obeng. Dunn also opposes interpreting the "inarticulate groans" as glossolalia, and supports the image of God as the searcher of hearts, who knows the Spirit's thoughts, which he understands from a Jewish perspective based on the OT. He also holds that ἐντυγχάνω should be understood as "make petition for" or "appeal to."⁹³

⁹⁰E. A. Obeng, "The Spirit Intercession Motif in Paul," *ET* 95/12 (1984): 360-363. Obeng's argument for the motif of Spirit intercession was further detailed in "The Origins of the Spirit Intercession Motif in Romans 8:26," *NTS* 32 (1986): 621-632. Other proponents of the glossolalic interpretation include K. Stendahl, *Meanings: The Bible as Document and as Guide* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 151-161.

⁹¹Julie L. Wu, "The Spirit's Intercession in Romans 8:26-27: An Exegetical Note," *ET* 104 (1993): 13. This perspective of intensity of prayer is expressed earlier in F. F. Bruce, *Romans* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1989), 165.

⁹²Ziesler, 223-224.

⁹³Dunn, 1:476-480.

Finally, James E. Rosscup argues that in 8:26-27 the Spirit should be viewed as offering intercessory prayer for those justified by God, pleading without the use of words "in caring empathy to secure what is best before God's throne."⁹⁴ His perspective is based on the Spirit as the "divine assistant" in helping believers to overcome human weakness and to "pray as we should." Thus the Spirit is the advocate, which Rosscup interprets through the legal imagery of the Gospels of Mark and John.⁹⁵ He also argues that the Spirit's prayer is according to the will of God—meeting God's standards—and the Father is in agreement based upon his perfect perception and intimate, loving involvement. He concludes that the Spirit's work is seeking to gain advantages for believers.⁹⁶

However, I propose that Paul's argument, in 8:14-25, that adoption through the Spirit makes Christians "sons of God" and "heirs," leads to a new avenue of approach to God the Father through a model of benefaction based on *familia* relations drawn from the Roman household. Based on believers' adoption into sonship (*filiusfamilia*) into the Father's *familia* and their becoming *sui heredes* with Christ, I propose that in 8:26-27 the Holy Spirit becomes the agent of the Father's benefaction to his adopted sons. In this role, the Spirit is traditionally termed "intercessor" or "advocate." However, as approached from a *familia* relations perspective, I would argue the idea of "intercessor/advocate" does not accurately reflect the *familia* aspects of the Spirit's role.

The Holy Spirit, as the Father's agent and member of the *familia*, fulfills the functions of a *filius*-petitioner and benefactor in 8:26-27. I propose this role is not one of forensic petition for legal relief from sin—an issue resolved in 8:1. Nor is it pleading for unworthy, sinful sons as a response to the sense of humanity's need for judicial release from divine punishment for sin. It is, rather, an intimate communication asking for mutually desired benefaction for those newly adopted.

Paul begins 8:26 with Ὡσαύτως δὲ ("and likewise" or "and in the same way"), to introduce the third rhetorical response to the *propositio* in Rom 8:1.⁹⁷ In 8:26, συναντιλαμβάνεται is often translated in the sense

⁹⁴James E. Rosscup, "The Spirit's Intercession," in *The Master's Seminary Journal*, 10/1 (1999): 139-162.

⁹⁵In his footnotes, Rosscup, 150-152, turns to the argument of *paraklete* (a legal advisor who assists in gaining a helpful verdict), using Mark 13:11 and the Gospel of John as his points of reference. It is questionable whether the Gospels' use of this terminology is intended to be interpreted similarly to Paul's use of "petitioner" in Rom 8.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 160-162.

⁹⁷The first two agencies of the Spirit were identified in Rom 8:2 and 8:14-16. Also see Schreiner, 442. Some authors relate Ὡσαύτως to the immediately preceding section "the hope" or "the groaning." However, this seems an inadequate response since the

of the Spirit “helps us.” This expression seems to parallel the “bearing witness” (συμμαρτυρεῖ) of 8:16. The LXX use of συναντιλαμβάνεται is in the sense of “to help in gaining something, to bear a burden with,⁹⁸ to come to the aid of or take up the cause of another.”⁹⁹ Paul’s choice of the term συναντιλαμβάνεται in 8:26 is significant in the context of Roman social relations. The NT synonym ἀντιλαμβάνομαι adds the concept of “being benefitted by” the action of an individual or party.¹⁰⁰ Given this understanding, it seems better to translate συναντιλαμβάνεται as “gains benefaction for.” Thus the Spirit is gaining benefaction for believers “in our weakness (ἀσθενεία)” (8:26). In context, ἀσθενεία seems better translated “our incapacity, limitations, or disability.”¹⁰¹

This incapacity describes the believer’s inability to know what to pray or ask benefaction for.¹⁰² Paul responds by emphasizing the Spirit’s “interceding” (ὑπερεντυγχάνει) for us (8:26). Most traditional perspectives assume semantic concepts of “interceding,” which deal with so-called sin issues. However, the believers are now part of the Father’s *familia*. Also, intercession primarily for forgiveness of sin or acceptance by the Father violates the language and context of Paul’s initial proclamation that believers are “no longer [under] any condemnation” in Rom 8:1. This leads to the conclusion that intercession to avoid judgment for sin does not fit the rationale or context of the Spirit’s petitioning or approaching the Father for benefaction.

It seems in Rom 8:26 that Paul presents the adopted believers as desiring to live out the Father’s will and seeking benefaction from the Father as part of his *familia*. In this context, the Holy Spirit is the agent

Spirit in the nominative is the subject of this verse. Vv. 14-16, which refer to the Spirit in the nominative or accusative, provide a stronger link to Paul’s rhetorical argument in Rom 8:26. See Fee, 576.

⁹⁸Moo, 523.

⁹⁹See Exod 18:22; Num 11:17; and Ps 88:21 (LXX). In Exod 18:22, Moses is incapable of judging the people on his own, so he is given assistance by additional judges. In Num 11:17, the Spirit is given to the seventy elders of Israel to provide additional leadership. In Ps 88:21 (LXX), King David is given God’s sustaining (συναντιλαμβάνεται) arm as power over enemies, which he is incapable of attaining (BDAG, 784). In each LXX reference, the common element is a new resource or benefit that provides a solution to something the persons are incapable of handling or attaining on their own. Also see Swanson, n. 5269.

¹⁰⁰Louw, 297 n. 25.79, and 625 n. 65.48.

¹⁰¹Swanson, nn. 819-820. Rosscup, 142-144.

¹⁰²Moo, 523-524. Morris, 326-327. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 278.

who is “making petition on behalf of”¹⁰³ (ὑπερεντυγχάνει) the believers in order to ascertain the will of the Father and distribute the Father’s benefaction to his “sons.” The Spirit acts as the Father’s agent and the believer’s *filius*-petitioner, and is a fellow “family member” of both. Since the Spirit is the Spirit of God, he intimately knows the Father’s will and reveals it to the believers.¹⁰⁴

Paul argues in Rom 8:27 that “the one searching the hearts knows what the thought of the Spirit is.” It is evident that the one searching the hearts refers to the Father.¹⁰⁵ However, the Father does not search “our hearts” as translated in the NIV and NET, but searches or intensely seeks the heart/thought/mind (φρόνημα) of the Spirit to receive the petitions of his “distant” yet “adopted sons.”¹⁰⁶ The Spirit, in turn, presents requests (ἐντυγχάνει) for the believers’ benefaction “according to God” (implying the Father’s will or pleasure).¹⁰⁷ Thus the Spirit serves as the perfect *familia*-petitioner because he is intimately known by the Father, and the Father’s adopted sons do not yet know him intimately. Thus this image of the Holy Spirit as agent fits within the social context of a Roman *familia*.

The concept of the Spirit as the one who works in the “inner man” is found in DSS literature and may reflect Jewish thought, as proposed by some commentators.¹⁰⁸ But the Romans to whom the letter is addressed were likely more familiar with Stoic philosophy; especially in this context, Seneca’s idea of Zeus’s divine spirit guiding humanity provides a cultural perspective for the phrase. Seneca, regarding the presence of God, writes: “What advantage is it that anything is hidden from man? Nothing is closed to God: He is present to our minds, and enters into our central thoughts.”¹⁰⁹ Also “God comes to men: no, what is yet nearer—he comes

¹⁰³W. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1996), 267.

¹⁰⁴See 1 Cor 2:9-12 (ISV): “But as it is written, ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him.’ But God has revealed those things to us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God. Is there anyone who can understand his own thoughts except by his own inner spirit? In the same way, no one can know the thoughts of God except by his Spirit. Now, we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we can understand the things that were freely given to us by God.”

¹⁰⁵Rosscup, 157-159.

¹⁰⁶Schreiner, 443-444, 446-447.

¹⁰⁷Fee, 585-586. See also Swete, 221.

¹⁰⁸See 1QS 4.2-8, 20-22; 1Q28b 2.22-25; also 4Q521 2.6 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, ed. Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996).

¹⁰⁹Seneca, *Letters*, Epistle 83, in *Seekers After God*, ed. F. W. Farrar (London:

into men. No good mind is holy without God.”¹¹⁰ Seneca also calls this the spirit of God at work: “God (Zeus) is near you, is with you, is within you, a sacred spirit dwells within us, the observer and guardian of all our evil and our good. . . . [T]here is no good man without God.”¹¹¹

Benefaction was distributed by granting requests of those asking on their own behalf or on behalf of others. In the distribution of benefaction, not only was some need met, but friendship was developed and deepened between the parties. In addition, the distribution of favor or granting gifts by a *patria* (“patron”) was considered “grace” (χάρις) in the Roman world. This granting of benefaction is attested in Seneca, Cicero, Pliny, and other pre- and post-Pauline sources. Benefaction was performed to bring mutual favor and goodwill, and to demonstrate generosity.¹¹²

However, requesting benefaction was the heart of Roman family relationships. For Paul’s audience, it dominated cultural interactions from the household to imperial administration. Sons, as *filiusfamilia*, as Paul proposed Roman Christians were in God’s “household,” would petition their father to receive benefaction and, in return, would praise and thank him for his goodness.¹¹³

Thus, in Rom. 8:26-27, the divine agent appears to function as the *familia*-petitioner, who requests and grants the Father’s benefaction, who extends benefaction to the Father’s household, based on a Greco-Roman model of adoptive kinship and *familia* relations.

Christ’s Role as Benefactor:

Romans 8:28-39

The fourth response to the proposition in Rom 8:1 is contained in 8:28-39. In this passage, the social-relations context of the Father’s *familia* continues to unfold. Romans 8:28-30 parallels the progression and realization of the “good” revealed as the Father’s benefaction granted to his *filiusfamilia*. In the Greco-Roman context, benefaction seems best understood as generosity, advantage, or benefit. The ones whom God has intentionally “called” (κλητός) are being benefitted. This “calling” is an invitation from a *patria* (“father”) to the believer to join him in relationship, which includes choosing who was to be adopted and,

Macmillan, 1868).

¹¹⁰Ibid., Epistle 73.

¹¹¹Ibid., Epistle 41.

¹¹²David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 96-116, (104-106, 113-116.)

¹¹³Ibid., 130-133.

especially, providing benefaction for the adopted children.¹¹⁴

In 8:29-30, Paul expounds on God's purpose of 8:28, beginning from before the current age and continuing to the age to come. Those whom God decided upon before time (προώρισεν),¹¹⁵ he invited (ἐκάλεσεν; within a context of blessing and salvation);¹¹⁶ those he invited, he set free (ἐδικαίωσεν) from slavery to sin.¹¹⁷ Finally, God glorified (ἐδόξασεν),¹¹⁸ praised, and honored those who were called, freed, and adopted as *filii familiae* with Christ.

The heart of 8:29-30 is God's conforming of those who are invited to the image (εἰκόνοσ) of Christ. Paul again invokes the symbolism of Roman *familia* relations with the dead to define the new sons' relationships with the firstborn of God's household. Images or statues were not only visual representations of family members, but embodied family lineage, name, and the honorable and virtuous characteristics of the person(s) being "imaged," a perspective familiar to a Roman audience.¹¹⁹ God desires his adopted sons to follow in the likeness of Christ, the Father's "first" son.¹²⁰ Thus God's actions in 8:29-30 are attained through the Spirit's intimacy with the Father and his new sons as proclaimed in 8:26-28.¹²¹

In Rom 8:31-39, the Father is on the side of his household members, which is demonstrated by his "freely giving (χαρίσεται)¹²² us all things," i.e., granting favor or benefaction (8:32). Christ is on the side of the believer through his death, resurrection, and presence at the Father's right hand, as he requests benefaction for his "siblings." Christ's action in 8:34 must be assessed in context of the Spirit's intercession in 8:26-27. Christ's petitioning is described in the same terms as the Spirit's. Thus it seems conclusive that Christ is another *filii*-petitioner for the Father's benefaction, but one who is at the

¹¹⁴Gardner, 203-204; and Louw, 423 n. 33.315-33.318.

¹¹⁵Louw, 359, n. 30.84; Moo, 532-533.

¹¹⁶BDAG, 399.

¹¹⁷In the context of Rom 6:7 and Paul's argument of Rom 8:2-13, especially 8:4, the meaning, I argue here, is not "justified," but "set free from slavery to sin, implying from the dominion of sin." See BDAG, 197.

¹¹⁸BDAG, 204.

¹¹⁹Rawson, 41-42. Also S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 191-196.

¹²⁰Byrne, 268-270. Imitation was the highest form of compliment in the Greco-Roman world, as attested by Paul in asking his churches to imitate him and also in Pliny's *Letters*. See also Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, 167.

¹²¹See 2 Cor 3:18 for an earlier Pauline presentation than in Rom 8:26-30. The Spirit moves man from one glory to another—the eschatologically unfading one yet to come.

¹²²BDAG, 876.

Father's right hand.¹²³ Thus Christ, in 8:34, is not John's advocate (παράκλητος) or the book of Hebrews's mediator (μεσίτης). These terms and contexts are significantly different from the agency Paul has portrayed in 8:26-27, 34.¹²⁴

In Rom 8.34, Paul adds that Christ "also intercedes for us at the right hand of God," seemingly in a complementary role to that of the Holy Spirit (emphasis supplied). Given a *familia* reading, the Holy Spirit and Christ have equal access to the Father not to satisfy the sinner's need for forgiveness and redemption, but for granting benefaction to Christians recognized as "sons and daughters" in the Father's household. The Holy Spirit's benefactory role is fully equal in necessity, importance, and value to Christ's requests for benefaction, but in a different realm of operation.

This portrayal of the Holy Spirit as "intercessor" challenges the traditional interpretation of Christ as humanity's sole intercessor. Christ is often singularly portrayed as humanity's high priest, advocate, mediator, or intercessor.¹²⁵ He is often portrayed as pleading for humanity's salvation, within a legal context of eternal judgment. But in Rom 8:26-27, Paul intimates that there are two active petitioners, not just one, who function in different roles than traditionally posited.

Conclusion

In summary, the Holy Spirit is the Father's agent throughout Rom 8, operating in four particular roles: the Spirit acts as the agent of manumission, freeing believers from slavery to the law of sin and death and from slavery to God; he is the agent of adoption, the manumitted sonship to the Father and coheirship with Christ; he is the agent of guarantee that the Father will fulfill the adoption in final eschatological redemption; and finally, he is the agent of petition for benefaction for those who are newly adopted into the Father's *familia*. The Spirit functions as *familia*-petitioner for the believer and distributor of the Father's benefaction to sons not yet living in his presence, and is a present demonstration of the Father's *pietas* and χάρις. Thus the Holy Spirit's intermediary role is as internal agent for the Father and humanity in all of the Father's salvific activity. His role is complementary, contemporaneous, and ongoing with Christ's role as benefactor. Thus Paul presents believers with two intermediaries: *familia*-petitioners,

¹²³Obeng, 363.

¹²⁴Byrne, 276-277.

¹²⁵See Heb 7:21-26; 8:1-6; and 9:11-28.

working on humanity's behalf not for legal need of right-standing in judgment, but for presenting requests for favor, benefaction, and blessing to meet the needs of the Father's petitioning sons. In conclusion, the Spirit is fulfilling the Father's purpose of distributing divine favor to his children.