

# Romans 9:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

## Analysis

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**They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God**—Paul explicitly interprets the Ishmael/Isaac typology. Tekna tēs sarkos (τέκνα τῆς σαρκός, 'children of the flesh') refers to natural descent apart from promise. Tekna tou theou (τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, 'children of God') are those born by divine promise and Spirit (John 1:12-13). Natural generation doesn't produce spiritual life.

**But the children of the promise are counted for the seed**—the verb logizetai (λογίζεται, 'reckoned/counted') is Paul's favored term for forensic justification (4:3-5). God imputes covenant status to promise-children, not flesh-children. This demolishes Jewish presumption based on Abrahamic descent. Birth privileges mean nothing without new birth. Election operates through promise received by faith, not through genetic inheritance.

## Historical Context

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This principle reappears throughout redemptive history: Cain/Abel, Ishmael/Isaac, Esau/Jacob, Saul/David. God's choosing doesn't follow primogeniture or human expectation. The pattern establishes that covenant membership depends on divine call, not human lineage—crucial for Gentile inclusion (v. 24).

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does John 1:12-13 ('born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God') reinforce Paul's argument?
2. What privileges of 'flesh' (family heritage, church background, baptism) might you wrongly trust for salvation?
3. How does the promise/flesh distinction explain why evangelism within covenant families is still necessary?

## Interlinear Text

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τοῦτ'	ἐστίν	οὐ	τὰ	τέκνα	τῆς	σαρκὸς
G5124	G2076	<b>are not</b>	G3588	<b>is They which are the children</b>	G3588	<b>of the flesh</b>
		G3756		G5043		G4561
ταῦτα	τέκνα	τοῦ	θεοῦ	ἀλλὰ	τὰ	
<b>these</b>	<b>is They which are the children</b>	G3588	<b>of God</b>	<b>but</b>	G3588	
G5023	G5043		G2316	G235		
τέκνα	τῆς	ἐπαγγελίας	λογίζεται	εἰς		
<b>is They which are the children</b>	G3588	<b>of the promise</b>	<b>are counted</b>	<b>for</b>		
G5043		G1860	G3049	G1519		
σπέρμα						
<b>the seed</b>						
G4690						

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 1:13** (References God): Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

**Romans 8:14** (References God): For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

**Psalms 87:6** (Parallel theme): The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

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