

person and thus lays claim to the whole person, for Yeshua died to redeem the chosen one. We are thus reminded that from God's perspective the material reality of creation is good and not to take second place to the non-physical realities.

"mortal body" is τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν in the Greek, literally, "your dying bodies." Our English "mortal" is based upon the Latin *mortalis*, "subject to death" and *mors*, "death." Once again the above interpretation of v. 10 (that "death" and "life" refer to the temporal death of the body and the eternal life of the believer) is strengthened.

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

The opening "So then" (Ἄρα οὖν, *ara oun*) alerts us to the fact that Paul has begun a new section or paragraph and is drawing upon the conclusions reached in the previous section. Since the flesh or sin nature is moving inevitably to death (and in fact we are putting the sin nature to death more and more), then it is clear we are under no obligation to follow or obey its lusts.

The NASB has translated the sentence more directly from the Greek, leaving it "dangling" as it were, in need of some completion (which we might look for in the ongoing context, but in vain). Indeed, the Greek sentence would read in such a way as to presume that Paul had in mind to finish with something like ". . . but to the Spirit, to live according to the Spirit." If this was in his mind, it never became part of the Epistle! The NIV solves the issue this way:

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.

Though this is not exactly as the Greek has it, the NIV does give the obvious sense: we do have an obligation to pursue righteousness and to live according to the will of HaShem, but we have no obligation to fulfill the desires of the flesh.

But why would Paul even think that the Roman believers would consider an obligation to the "flesh?" Here we must understand "flesh" to be more than the individual psyche or inner wrestlings. "Flesh," while primarily connoting the sinful nature, takes into its context the culture and traditions of culture which lead to sin or are themselves sinful. We should remember that in the pagan cultures, religion and clan involvement were hand in hand, so that a believer in Yeshua in the context of 1st Century Rome would constantly be faced with decisions pertaining to what, in God's point of view, was clearly immoral and wrong, but to the culture was accepted and even praiseworthy. It is surely conceivable that believing Gentiles would face the dilemma of family/cultural issues which would ask them to compromise their faith and not walk in righteousness. Here Paul makes it clear that one has no obligation to the sinful ways of the flesh, whether they originate from within one's own soul, or come from without. As those who are learning what submission to the Torah actually is in everyday life, we must remember where our obligations lie.

13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

These two contrasting clauses present the two possible conditions offered in the covenant (Dt 11:26ff; 30:15ff): blessing and cursing, life and death. To "live according to the flesh" is to live in bondage to the sinful desires and passions which Paul represents by the term "flesh," a condition which is true of unbelievers, not believers. Such a living makes it clear that the Spirit is not in control and that such a person exists always at the point of death as the punishment of sin. The Greek is periphrastic: μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, literally "about to die" (NASB = "must die;" NIV = "you will die"), emphasizing the inevitable connection between living according to the

flesh and death.

by the Spirit – “Spirit” is instrumental, i.e., the only means by which the believer may in fact put to death the deeds of the flesh is the Spirit of God. But in order to dissuade anyone from viewing the Spirit as a mere tool in the hands of the believer, Paul goes on in the next verse to describe Him as πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, “led by the Ruach Elohim.”

putting to death – note the continual aspect (pres. act. indicative) of “putting to death.” Though death may be viewed as a onetime occurrence, Paul uses the metaphor as a radical dealing with the multitude of sinful lusts which are characteristic of the sinful flesh. Thus, the chore of putting the deeds of sin to death is a continual one for the child of God.

“deeds of the body” must be equivalent to “deeds of the flesh” (σάρξ, *sarks*) and in fact in a few manuscripts (D G latt Ir Tert) “flesh” is written in place of “body.” Thus it is not the normal functions of the body which Paul refers to here but the sinful, human self-centeredness and self-assertion which must be mortified.

you will live – this phrase helps us to understand and define the opposite of “death” already referred to. Since the believer is putting to death the deeds of the flesh/body, he or she is assured of not only life in this world, but eternal life in the world to come. In the same manner, then, the person characterized by the deeds of the flesh will die in the sense of eternal separation from HaShem. That Paul, along with Yeshua, understood the punishment of the wicked to be both conscious and eternal seems apparent (Mt 10:28; 13:42; Mk 9:48; Rom 2:6ff; 2Thess 1:5-10). Some scholars (particularly those of the Seventh-day Adventists) have challenged this viewpoint, however. See Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection?* (Biblical Perspectives, 1997).

14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Paul's point in this summary statement (which is restating what was said in the previous verse) is obvious: putting to death the deeds of the flesh is accomplished by following the lead of the Spirit. Even as those who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body will live, so it may be categorically stated that all who are led by the Spirit truly belong to God, i.e., are the sons of God.

Here we have, once again, that enigma of the cooperative work of the believer with God to accomplish His purposes in one's life. For the former verse makes the child of God active in this process (“put to death the deeds of the body”) but here the Spirit is acting (“those who are led by the Spirit”) and the believer merely follows (thus the passive ἄγονται, *agontai*, “are led”). We may explain it this way: the work of sanctification is both initiated and prompted by the Spirit, enabling the believer to do what he otherwise could not. But it is the believer, having been renewed in soul by the regeneration process of salvation, who actively engages in the process of sanctification (i.e., the putting to death of the deeds of the flesh). As Cranfield puts it:

The daily, hourly putting to death of the schemings and enterprises of the sinful flesh by means of the Spirit is a matter of being led, directed, impelled, controlled by the Spirit.²¹⁸

Yeshua is our prime example of what it means to be led by the Spirit (Lk 4:1). And Paul writes in similar language to the Galatians (5:16-18)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the (*condemnation of the*) Torah.

Note that “under the Torah” must correspond to the idea of “death” (i.e., “condemnation”)

in the Romans parallel. Thus, to be “led” by the Spirit is to “walk” by the Spirit—the phrases convey the same idea. Likewise, to live according to the flesh is “death,” i.e., being under the condemnation of the Torah.

sons of God – this interprets what Paul means in the previous verse by “shall live.” Members of God’s family are assured of His blessing and good pleasure, and need never fear His condemnation. “The life which God promises is not a mere not-dying: it is to be a son of God, to live as a son of God, both now and hereafter.”²¹⁹

Here then is yet another description of our freedom: even as we were redeemed from Egypt to serve the Almighty, so we have been redeemed from our sin to be led by the Spirit, to do His bidding, not our own. Our freedom consists in pleasing our Father by Whose grace and election we have obtained our place as sons. (On the phrase “sons of God,” cf. Mt 5:9; Lk 20:36; Rom 8:19; Gal 3:26 and note the idea of immortality which is attached to or latent in the terminology.)

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

Our verse begins with the word “For” (γάρ, *gar*) which most likely informs us that this verse is intended as confirmation of the statement just made in v. 14 (that those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God).

The contrast is obvious: “spirit of slavery” (πνεῦμα δουλείας, *pneuma douleias*) vs. “spirit of sonship (adoption)” (πνεῦμα υιοθεσίας, *pneuma huiiothesias*). But various options have been given for explanations of each of these phrases. We may summarize the various interpretations as follows:

- 1) Some feel that since the same verbiage is used for both (“received” and “spirit”) that “spirit” must be the same in both. Thus, if “spirit of adoption” is referring to the Holy Spirit (capital S) then so must the phrase “spirit of slavery.” Since the Holy Spirit cannot be the “spirit of slavery,” then it is reasoned that “spirit of adoption” is likewise not referring to the Spirit of God. Thus, according to this view “spirit” in each case refers to the human spirit, and is interpreted to mean that the believer has a spirit of adoption (a spirit which responds to a Father-son relationship with HaShem), albeit, moved upon by the Spirit of God. The spirit of slavery, then, would be the heavy, burdensome spirit of the unbeliever, and particularly the unbeliever under the condemnation of the Torah.
- 2) Others do not feel that the word “spirit” is necessarily to be equated, so that the “spirit of slavery” speaks of the disposition of the unbeliever, while “Spirit of adoption” refers to the Holy Spirit.
- 3) A third option, and one which seems most likely to me, is that the sentence itself does not necessarily affirm the existence of a “spirit of slavery,” but simply that the Holy Spirit is not the kind of spirit Who would bring slavery, but would rather confirm and strengthen the relationship to HaShem of His children. Compare also the following parallels:

1Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,

2Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

The fact that the aorist (final, past tense) is used of the word “to receive” (ἐλάβετε, *elabete*, from λαμβάνω, *lambano*) would point to the once and for all giving of the Spirit at the time of initial belief.

Paul's primary point here is that the Spirit is the One Who indwells the believer and unites him or her to God through the eternal work of the Son. He does not bring them back under the bondage of sin, whether in the sense of striving to gain one's own salvation through status gained through the Torah, or in the senseless rituals of paganism.

“Fear” (φόβος, *phobos*) here must, then, be anxiety or despair, not the kind of “fear of God” which we are told is the beginning of wisdom and an essential ingredient of a holy life. Here we understand the difference between those who live under the mistaken impression that one can actually gain right standing before God through one's ethnic status (Jewish by identity, whether native born or proselyte), and those who have come to rest in the finished work of Yeshua. The indwelling Spirit reminds and constantly teaches us that our security—our safety from the wrath of God against sin—is to be found in the completed and perfect work of Yeshua the Messiah. He does this through the word of God, the inspired record of HaShem's purposes and accomplished deeds.

How important, then, for us to understand the difference between “adoption” and “fear.” The two are mutually exclusive, for to understand what it means to be a child of God—this understanding leaves no room for fear. For God makes promises to His children, promises He will inevitably keep. And even His chastening is a sign of His love (Heb.12:6). Thus, to labor under the fear of condemnation is to fail to understand and/or believe the reality of our identity as “sons of God” (cf. Dt 14:1; Mt 5:9; Gal 3:26).

What exactly does the word “adoption” mean here? The Greek term υιοθεσία (*hiotesia*) occurs only a few times in the Apostolic writings: Rom 8:23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5. It is not found in the Lxx. We know that in the Hellenistic world adoption in a legal sense was common, and this word was the primary word denoting such an occurrence. While an exact parallel to adoption within the Hellenistic world is lacking in the Jewish culture of ancient Israel, the fact that orphans were raised by guardians is a given. David uses this metaphor (Ps 27:10) of a person abandoned by mother and father but sustained by God. The idea of “guardian” (הַאֲמִין, *ha'omein*) is found in a number of texts in the Tanach (Num 11:12; Ruth 4:16; 2Ki 10:1; Is 49:23) and Yeshua reminded His disciples that He would not leave them as orphans (Jn 14:16-18) but would send the Spirit to act as their “guardian.” One finds, therefore, in this term, the clear teaching of one's relationship with God as a familial one. And that He should be known as the believer's Father is taught by Yeshua (Mt 6:9f) and the Apostles (1Co 8:6, etc.) as well as by the prophets of the Tanach (Is 64:8, etc.). We might also note an example from the midrashim:

Another explanation of ‘But now, O Lord, Thou are our Father’ (Is 64:8). The Holy One, blessed be He, said: ‘You have ignored your own fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Me do you call father?’ To which they [Israel] replied: ‘Thee do we recognize as our Father.’ It can be compared to an orphan who was brought up with a guardian [אפוטרופוס] that was a good and trustworthy man, and brought her up and looked after her most carefully. Later he wished to marry her, and when the scribe came to write the marriage document he asked her: ‘What is your name?’ To which she replied: ‘So-and-so’; but when he asked her: ‘What is the name of your Father?’ She was silent. Whereupon her guardian asked her: ‘Why are you silent?’ And she replied: ‘Because I know of no other father save you, for he that brings up a child is called a father, and not he that gives birth’ . . . Similarly, the orphan is Israel, as it says, ‘We are become orphans and fatherless (Lam 5:3). The good and faithful guardian is the Holy One, blessed be He, whom Israel began to call ‘Our Father’, as it says, ‘But now, O Lord, Thou are our father’ (Is 64:8). God said: ‘You have ignored your own father, and now call Me your father’; as it says, ‘Look unto Abraham your father, etc. (Is 51:2). They replied: ‘Lord of the Universe! He who brings up children is called the

father, not he who gives birth,' as it says, For Thou art our father; for Abraham knoweth us not (Is 63:16).²²⁰

Thus, here as well as in 9:4, Paul's use of the idea of "adoption," while no doubt embracing the Hellenistic legal "adoption," may still have had in mind the general situation lived out in the ancient Israelite community of the orphan being cared for by a guardian.

by which we cry out, "Abba, Father – Some translations (such as the RSV) connect this phrase with the next verse:

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

The NIV has isolated the phrase so that it goes with verse 15, but as a separate sentence:

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

While the grammar could allow either, it seems best to take the traditional understanding as represented by the NASB, and make this the final phrase of v. 15. As such, the point Paul is making is an important one, namely, that it is by the work of the indwelling Spirit that we are able to approach HaShem as Abba and call out to Him with this relationship in mind (cp. Gal 4:6). This being the case, "Spirit of adoption" refers to the Holy Spirit in His work of making the believer a son or daughter in the family of God, and of teaching that child of God about his or her identity—so much so that one is able to call out "Abba."

The use of the verb "cry out" (κράζειν, *krazein*) seems to suggest a calling out to God at times of distress or need (cf. 1Co 14:15). Others, suggesting that the word simply denotes a loud proclamation, feel it refers to public prayer or the opening of a liturgical section. Still others have suggested that it speaks of open public prayer in full voice as over against the whispered prayer common in the ancient Jewish congregation. But if we look at the use of κράζειν in the Lxx, we discover the most obvious sense, that being of urgent prayer, a use often found in the Psalms (cf. Ps 3:4[5]; 4:3[4]; 18:6[17:7]; 22:2, 5[21:3, 6]; 34:6[33:7]). As Cranfield notes:

It is used to represent several different Hebrew words. So here it is best taken to denote an urgent and sincere crying to God irrespective of whether it is loud or soft (or even unspoken), formal or informal, public or private.²²¹

"Abba" (אבא) is, of course, an Aramaic word whose origin was an exclamatory form of "father" used by small children, but by the time of Yeshua was used more extensively, no longer something thought of as child's speech. Its origin, however, was never lost, and it evoked a homey and affectionate sense of the father-child relationship, so much so that it is never used in ancient Judaism to address HaShem (used as a vocative. Its non-vocative use with reference to God is very rare).²²² That Yeshua addressed HaShem this way (Mk 14:36) expressed His unique relationship to God. That He instructed His disciples to use the title "Abba" as well would indicate that He wanted them (and us) to know that a unique relationship likewise exists between each believer and the Father.

If we are to look at the general argument of Paul in this section we can see that it is to this point he wishes to move—here is his primary emphasis—the addressing of God as "Abba." For he wishes his readers to know that our slavery to sin has been broken, and that our freedom to live unto God is now the reality. We no longer are slaves to sin because we have become sons of

God. The proof of our sonship is that we are putting to death the deeds of the flesh through the power of the Spirit, we are being led by the Spirit in our daily *halachah*, and it is by the presence of the Spirit and His work in our lives that we are confident in our acceptance before the Father, causing us to cry out to Him, "Abba."

This then is what it means to live after the Spirit, to mortify by the Spirit the deeds of the body, and to be led by the Spirit of God—simply to be enabled by that same Spirit to cry, 'Abba, Father.' And it is here expressed not as an imperative but as an indicative: Christians do as a matter of fact do this. The implicit imperative is that they should continue to do just this, and do it more and more consistently, more and more sincerely, soberly and responsibly. This is all that is required of them. It is what the whole law of God is aimed at achieving. All that must be said about the Christian's obedience has been already said in principle when this has been said. Nothing more is required of us than that we should cry to the one true God 'Abba, Father' with full sincerity and with full seriousness. That this necessarily includes seeking with all our heart to be and think and say and do what is well-pleasing to Him and to avoid all that displeases Him, should go without saying. In the accomplishment of this work of obedience the 'righteousness of the law' is fulfilled (cf. v. 4) and God's holy law established.²²³

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

This is the means by which we are willing and able to cry out, "Abba, Father," because the Spirit is witnessing with our spirit about the realities of who we are—our true identity. Thus, the means by which we gain our adoption as sons, and by which we call out "Abba," is nothing less than the authority of God Himself in His Spirit assuring us that we are His children. This work of the Spirit comes before our calling out "Abba," and is independent of our own efforts and abilities. For Paul, the working out of the righteousness of the Torah in the lives of the believers is the ongoing work of the Spirit as He witnesses to the spirit of the believer.

There is a question whether the word *συνμαρτυρεῖν*, *summarturein*, "witness with" should be understood as "witness together with" or "witness to," and thus "assure." In light of the position taken above that the Spirit is the means by which one calls out to HaShem as "Abba," it seems best to understand this not that the Spirit witnesses together with the spirit of the believer, but that the Spirit witnesses to the spirit of the believer. It is this work of the Spirit, apart from anything we do, that assures us that we are, indeed, the children of God.

What is the means by which the Holy Spirit assures us in our spirits that we are, indeed, the child of God? The means is the knowledge we gain from the very revelation of God in His word, a knowledge which could never be imparted to us apart from the work of the Spirit. It is, then, the work of the Spirit to illumine our minds both to receive and understand the significance of the Scriptures for our lives. In this knowledge we come to know the method by which God declares sinners righteous (i.e., faith in the sacrificial work of His Son) and thus the manner in which we stand justified in His sight. It is likewise by this knowledge, gained through the avenue of faith, that we are enabled to cry out to Him in the language of family, calling Him "Abba." The assuring work of the Spirit, then, is not one of subjectivity (in which He subjectively witnesses together with our spirit) but is objective in the sense of unfolding the truth of Scripture to our spirits or minds, and by this divine revelation assuring us of our status as sons.

17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Messiah, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

In this concluding sentence Paul has moved us from sonship to the concept of heirship, by which he moves us to the whole concept of "hope," the primary subject of this paragraph (vv. 17-30), as well as the work of the indwelling Spirit. For the Spirit, in assuring us of our position as children of God, likewise causes us to cast our gaze forward to the day of our final and full redemption—the day when we will receive the inheritance reserved for us by our Father (cf. 1Pt 1:3-4).

The language of inheritance in Paul is found primarily in two other places: Rom 4 and Gal 3 & 4. In Rom 4:13 the fact that Abraham was promised to inherit the world (τὸ κληρονόμιον αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμου) is linked to the covenant which God made with him, a covenant which required Abraham's faith in the "promise" (Gen 15:6) and was not based upon works of the Torah. That is, Abraham did not first gain acceptance through obedience, and then was granted covenant membership. Rather, he was granted covenant membership through faith, which resulted in his obedience. Furthermore, those who are members of that covenant, i.e., who have righteousness by faith in the Messiah, are likewise heirs with Abraham (4:17).²²⁴ Here, then, the heirship afforded the believers in Yeshua is clearly traced through their relationship with Abraham (as those who likewise participate in the same faith that Abraham exercised) and the covenant God made with him and his heirs.

The other Pauline passage which touches on heirship is Gal 3 & 4. Here, as in Rom 4, the distinction is made between those who would think their inheritance is based upon Torah (ἐκ νόμου, *ek nomos*, "flowing from Torah") and those who have inheritance based upon faith, i.e., who are heirs "according to promise" (κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι), on the basis of faith and not of righteous deeds. Furthermore, while the text of Rom 8 has the phrase "heirs of God" (κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ), Gal 4:7 uses the language "heir through God" (κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ). What may we make of these similarities and differences in the language?

First, we should consider the very real possibility that Paul speaks on two levels: one is the level of the direct redemption which God has accomplished for each of His chosen ones through the death and resurrection of Messiah. From this point of view there is only the mediator Yeshua between God and the redeemed sinner (cf. 1Tim 2:5). This level considers the individual member of the covenant. The second level, however, is corporate and is thus one of history—of the history of redemption and of the covenant made with Abraham and his seed. At this level, the redemption is seen as the covenant benefit for all who may rightly claim family ties with Abraham. Thus, while from one point of view the believer is an "heir of God," from the other standpoint he is an "heir through God," i.e., through the covenant which God made with Abraham.

We should consider the obvious fact that neither level or point of view is more valuable than the other, but both work together in the overall picture of redemption. For the redemption which God has accomplished through His Son Yeshua is in every way tied to the covenant made with Abraham, yet is applicable to each individual within the covenant. There is thus both a corporate identity ("heirs of promise") as well as an individual identity as an "heir of God" and "joint heir with Messiah."

This heirship language of Paul may also be considered from the standpoint of covenant. For whereas a mortal dies and leaves his wealth to his children as their inheritance, HaShem lives for ever, and will never die. In what way, then, can His children inherit His wealth?

It is an interesting fact that in the ancient Near East kings would often adopt their vassals in order to strengthen the vassal's credibility and warn off any who might try to usurp his position. As the adopted son of the Great King, he was far more untouchable than merely as an appointed ruler. Thus, adoption, and the heirship which went with it, became connected with the whole matter of covenant between Great Kings and their vassals. In fact, the Greek word

διαθήκη, *diatheke*, which is the word used in the Apostolic Scriptures for “covenant,” likewise could be used of a “last will and testament” (cf. Heb 9:16-17). Thus, “inheritance” came to be connected with the whole matter of “covenant”—inheritance being, in this way, the very fruit of the covenant promises enjoyed by those it embraced.

and fellow-heirs with Messiah – This additional phrase is not a condition but rather gives further substantiation for the claim that the believer is an “heir of God.” The Greek begins with εἶπερ, *eiper*, which here (as in v. 9) means “seeing that” and is roughly equivalent with Greek γάρ, *gar*, “for.” Cranfield paraphrases this way:

“for the fact that we are now suffering with Him, so far from calling the reality of our heirship in question, is a pledge of our being glorified with Him hereafter.”²²⁵

if indeed we suffer with Him – The suffering which Paul alludes to here is not the suffering undergone for us vicariously in the death of Messiah, nor the metaphoric “suffering” dramatized in our baptism (*mikvah*), for if either of these would have been in the Apostle’s mind he doubtless would have used the past tense. In using the present tense however (συμπάσχομεν, *sumpaschomen*) he emphasizes the

“element of suffering which is inseparable from faithfulness to Christ in a world which does not yet know Him as Lord.”²²⁶

The life of the truly redeemed is a life of conformity to Yeshua, and this conformity will bring suffering as He taught it would (Lk 6:22; cf. 1Pt 2:21). This suffering for righteousness sake is, in one sense, a true test of genuine faith, for often those who possess only spurious “faith” fail when the times of testing come (cf. James 1:2ff).

in order that we may also be glorified with Him – The sense of “in order that” (ἵνα, *hina*) is not the subjective motive of the sufferers (“if I suffer more I’ll gain eternal glorification”) but, as is often the case with this Greek particle, indicates the inevitable result of the action or condition previously described. Thus, the sure reward for all who suffer as a result of being followers of the Messiah is that they will be glorified with God for all eternity. It is this promise of sure reward that constitutes the hope of all true believers (cf. 1Jn 3:2-3).

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

The actual Greek word order puts the emphasis upon the idea of “compared”: ἄξια, *aksia*, from ἄξιος, *aksios*, means “weighing as much,” “of like value,” “of equal worth.” Thus, the NASB “not worthy to be compared” translates οὐκ ἄξια (*ouk aksia*) which stands at the beginning of the verse. We might translate, then, “For not even worthy of comparison are the sufferings of this present time with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

Paul speaks similarly in 2Cor 4:16-17:

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

In accordance with the previous verse, the “sufferings of this present time” are no doubt those which come as a result of publically proclaiming one’s faith in Messiah. The coming glory is the full realization of that which we now only possess in part, i.e., as the foreshadowing of what the full glory will be. As sons and heirs we now possess the presence of the Spirit in our lives, and He is the “down payment” (עֲרָבוֹן, ἀρραβών, *arrabon*, cf. 2Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14) as-