

Romans 8:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Analysis

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves (ou mónon, allà kai autoì tèn aparchèn toû pneúmatos échontes, kai hêmeîs autoì en heautoís stenázomen)—Believers join creation's groaning. Aparchèn toû pneúmatos ("firstfruits of the Spirit") indicates the Spirit is down payment, guarantee of full inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). We have the Spirit now; we await fullness then. The repetition autoì...hêmeîs autoì ("ourselves...we ourselves") is emphatic: even those possessing the Spirit groan.

Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (huióthesián apekdechómenoi, tèn apolútrōsin toû sómatos hēmōn)—Huióthesiá ("adoption") here is consummation of what began at conversion (v. 15). We are adopted now (legal status) but await adoption's full manifestation (bodily resurrection). Apolútrōsis toû sómatos ("redemption of the body") is resurrection—not escape from bodies but transformation of bodies into glorified, immortal state (1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Philippians 3:21).

Historical Context

Gnostic dualism despised the body as prison; salvation meant escape. Paul affirms the body's redemption—Christianity is holistic, redeeming whole persons (body and soul). The early church's insistence on bodily resurrection (despite Greek mockery, Acts 17:32) preserved biblical anthropology against Platonic soul-body dualism.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do you experience the tension between possessing the Spirit's "firstfruits" and groaning for consummation?
2. What does "redemption of our body" mean practically—how will resurrection bodies differ from present ones?
3. How does certainty of bodily resurrection affect how you treat your physical body now?

Interlinear Text

οὐ	μόνον	δέ	ἀλλὰ	καὶ	αὐτοὶ	τὴν	ἀπαρχὴν	τοῦ
not	only	And	they but	also	ourselves	G3588	the firstfruits	G3588
G3756	G3440	G1161	G235	G2532	G846		G536	
πνεύματος	ἔχοντες	καὶ	ἡμεῖς	αὐτοὶ	ἐν	ἐαυτοῖς		
of the Spirit	which have	also	we	ourselves	within	ourselves		
G4151	G2192	G2532	G2249	G846	G1722	G1438		
στενάζομεν	νίοθεσίαν	ἀπεκδεχόμενοι	τὴν	ἀπολύτρωσιν				
groan	for the adoption	waiting	G3588	to wit the redemption				
G4727	G5206	G553		G629				
τοῦ	σώματος	ἡμῶν						
G3588	body	of our						
G4983	G2257							

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 9:28 (Parallel theme): So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Ephesians 1:14 (Redemption): Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30 (Redemption): And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Romans 7:24 (Parallel theme): O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Titus 2:13 (Parallel theme): Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Romans 8:19 (Parallel theme): For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Luke 20:36 (Parallel theme): Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Galatians 5:5 (Spirit): For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

1 John 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Luke 21:28 (Redemption): And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org