

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 199 – July 18th – Romans 4:13-5:5

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Romans

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 Murray, John *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 Vols, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1959 & 1965.
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Verses 13-22

Verses 13-22 focus on the theme of promise. Moo suggests the following breakdown:

- i) The promise is based on faith not the law (vv.13-15).
- ii) The promise, because it is based on faith, unites Jews and Gentiles together into one people of God (vv.16-17).
- iii) The faith with which Abraham responded to God's promise was firm and unwavering (vv.18-22).

Verse 13

Οὐ γὰρ διὰ νόμου ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἢ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ, τὸ κληρονόμον αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμου, ἀλλὰ διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως·

Οὐ γὰρ διὰ νόμου cf. Gal 3:17

ἐπαγγελία, ας f promise, what is promised
σπέρμα, τος n seed, offspring

vv.17,18 use this term of Christian believers.

The definite article το belongs with the infinitive εἶναι

κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives
what is promised (by God)
εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

κληρονομος κοσμου The promise to Abraham was that he, or rather his seed, would possess the *land*. Paul makes use of the ambiguity of the Hebrew term which, in itself, may mean either a specific piece of land or the earth (as in Genesis 1:1). In referencing the promise to Abraham Paul here uses the Greek term κοσμος which cannot be restricted to a piece of land.

However, Paul's argument is not mere word-play but reflects a Biblical Theology rooted in the Old Testament promise itself. Paul views the promise of the land to Abraham as typical of the promise of the earth to the people of God. This promise, which finds typical fulfilment in David's rule over the land promised to Abraham, finds ultimate fulfilment in Christ, David's greater son who is Lord of all creation. The promise of the land to Abraham's seed and promise of the κοσμος to Christ are one and the same.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires, justice
πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief, the Christian faith

Verse 14

εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἐκ νόμου κληρονόμοι, κεκένωται ἡ πίστις καὶ κατήρηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία·

κεκένωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s κενωω
deprive of power, make of no effect
κατήρηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s
καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do away with

"Bringing law into the matter eviscerates the very meaning of 'faith' and 'promise.'" Moo.

Verse 15

ὁ γὰρ νόμος ὀργὴν κατεργάζεται, οὗ δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος, οὐδὲ παράβασις.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

A few interpret this of human anger, but it is the wrath of God that Paul surely has in mind, cf. 3:20; 5:20; 7:5.

κατεργαζομαι accomplish, bring about
οὗ adv where
παράβασις, εως f transgression,
disobedience, sin

"Transgression ... is a sin. But not all sin is transgression. Anytime we fall short of conformity of God's image, we sin; but only when we directly violate a commandment God has given us do we commit a transgression. For this reason, then, transgression is also a more serious form of sin, meriting a greater judgment." Moo.

Verse 16

Διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν, εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι, οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (ὃς ἐστὶν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν,

δια τουτο for this reason

Looks back to v.14. For the reason given in v.14, God's plan was made to rest on faith that it might be a matter of grace. Wright argues that it points back to v. 1 – Paul now concludes the answer to the question he raised there.

χαρις, ιτος f grace
βεβαιος, α, ον reliable, firm, well founded
σπερμα see v.13

ἐκ του νομου here used not in the sense of means of obtaining the promise but simply as a designation for Jews.

μονον adv only, alone

ὃς ἐστὶν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν cf. vv.11-12.

Wright objects to the bracketing of 16b-17a. He argues, "Faith, grace and promise, then, are vital to this chapter, but they are not its main subjects. The main subjects are Abraham, his family and his God. This is what we would expect if the overall subject of the larger section is indeed the revelation of God's covenant faithfulness and the creation of a Jew-plus-Gentile family. The present verses have often been read exactly the other way round, resulting in the bracketing, by the NRSV, of the key statement in vv 16b-17a... Romans 4 is not a 'proof from Scripture' of 'justification by faith,' into which Paul has inserted some remarks about the fatherhood of Abraham and the character of God; it is an exposition of the covenant of God and the way in which the covenant promises to Abraham were fulfilled, with justification and faith playing their part within the overall argument."

Verse 17

καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τέθεικά σε), κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσεν θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶσαντος τὸν νεκρὸν καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα·

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

ἔθνος, ους n nation, people

τέθεικά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s τιθημι

place, set, appoint

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

κατέναντι before, in the sight of

Murray understands the quotation to be parenthetical, in which case, κατέναντι οὗ refers back to πατὴρ παντων ἡμων i.e. Abraham is the father of us all before God.

ζωοποιεω give life, make alive

Abraham understood this aspect of God's character (that he is the Creator God who gives life to the dead and creates something out of nothing) and it was this that enabled him to trust in the promise of descendants despite his own 'deadness' and even in the face of the later command to sacrifice his only son. This is a model of Christian faith which believes in the God who gives life to the dead in that it has its focus in Christ's death and resurrection and its confidence in the life given us in him (cf. v.24). The conversion of the Gentiles is an act of the God who calls the things that are not and brings them into being – making people of God of those who are not a people. Wright adds, "When God brings a Jew to share the faith of Abraham, this is more like a life out of death, a renewal of covenant membership after the threat of being cut off (cf. 2:25-29; 11:11-16, esp 11:15...)."

νεκρος, α, ον dead

Verse 18

ὃς παρ' ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον· Οὕτως ἐστὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου·

παρα with acc contrary to

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

It is when human hope is exhausted that God-given hope comes into effect – a hope that rests simply on the promise, power and faithfulness of God. Faith rests on what God has spoken and deems his word warrant enough.

εἰρημένον Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc s λεγω

οὕτως adv. formed from οὗτος thus

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι

Verse 19

καὶ μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει κατένοησεν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα νεκρωμένον, ἑκατονταετῆς που ὑπάρχων, καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας,

ἀσθενεω be ill, be weak

κατανοεω consider, think of, notice

Textual evidence is finely divided between κατενοησεν and οὐ κατενοησεν. Either reading would make sense in context. Most versions prefer to omit οὐ.

In his *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Metzger writes, "οὐ κατενοησεν, like many other readings of Western origin, appears at first to be preferable, after further reflection it reveals itself to be less appropriate in the context: here Paul does not wish to imply that faith means closing one's eyes to reality, but that Abraham was so strong in faith as to be undaunted by every consideration."

σωμα, τος n body

ἤδη adv now, already

Many MSS omit ἤδη

νεκρωμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s νεκρωω put to death (pf pass ptc as good as dead)

ἑκατονταετης, ες a hundred years old

πού enclitic adv somewhere, almost

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)

νεκρωσις, εως f death

μητρα, ας f womb

Wright comments, "Paul draws a veil over the various episodes such as Abraham's passing Sarah off as his sister and the whole matter of Hagar and Ishmael... The feature of his faith to which Paul draws attention is its persistence in hoping for new life when Abraham's and Sarah's bodies were, in terms of potential childbearing, as good as dead because of their age."

Verse 20

εις δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ ἀλλὰ ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει, δοῦς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ

Wright comments that Paul "shows that Abraham was exactly unlike the human condition described in 1:18-32."

ἐπαγγελία, ας f promise

διακρινω judge; aor pass doubt, hesitate.

ἀπιστία, ας f unbelief

ἐνεδυναμώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ἐνδυναμοω strengthen; pass become strong

Could mean 'strengthened by faith' (dative of instrument), though most read as 'he was strengthened in faith.'

δοῦς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s διδωμι

δοξα, ης f glory

Verse 21

καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς ὅτι ὁ ἐπιγγελαὶ δυνατός ἐστὶν καὶ ποιῆσαι.

πληροφορηθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s

πληροφορεω convince fully, assure fully

ἐπιγγελαὶ Verb, perf pass indic, 3s

ἐπαγγελιομαι promise

δυνατός, η, ον possible, powerful, able

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

This verse follows on from the closing words of the previous: to give glory to God is to reckon God to be what he is and to rely upon his power and faithfulness.

Verse 22

διὸ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

ἐλογίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s λογιζομαι reckon, credit

"When, therefore, Paul says that the reason Abraham's faith was 'reckoned as righteousness' was because it was this sort of faith, he does not mean that Abraham earned special favour by having a special sort of faith. He means that precisely this sort of faith, evoked by sheer grace, is evidence of a human life back on track, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, from disbelief to faith and from corruption to fruitfulness. Faith is the sign of life; life is the gift of God. Justification is God's declaration that where this sign of life appears, the person in whom it appears is within the covenant." Wright.

Verse 23

Οὐκ ἐγράφη δὲ δι' αὐτὸν μόνον ὅτι ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ,

μονον adv only, alone

Cf. 15:4; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:11. Paul does not deny the importance of the original context of the passages he quotes. Rather, Paul views the OT as covenant history, the history of the promises and saving acts of God which find their focus and fulfilment in Christ. All that God said and did under the Old Covenant he said and did for us, for the sake of those who are in Christ.

Verse 24

ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἡμᾶς οἷς μέλλει λογιζέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν,

μελλω be about, intend, be destined

λογίζεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin λογιζομαι

ἐγειρω raise

νεκρός, α, ον dead

Our faith, like that of Abraham, rests in a God who brings life out of death, cf. v.17. "In Abraham's case, God revealed this power in creating life in the dead womb of Sarah. For us, this power of God is manifested in his raising from the dead Jesus our Lord. Paul often describes God as the one who raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 8:11; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:15; 2 Cor 4:14), but he rarely makes God the object of our belief. He does so here to make Christian faith as similar to Abraham's faith as possible." Moo.

"Christian faith is thus, for Paul, irrevocably resurrection-shaped... Confessing that Jesus is Lord, therefore, and that God raised him from the dead (10:9), means sharing the faith of Abraham; and that faith, as Paul has now argued, is the one and only badge of membership in Abraham's family." Wright.

Verse 25

ὅς παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν καὶ ἠγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαιοσιν ἡμῶν.

παραδίδωμι hand over, deliver up
 παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing
 ἠγέρθη Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἐγειρω
 δικαιοσις, εως f putting into a right
 relationship (with God); setting free,
 acquittal

This verse is viewed by many as a creedal formula which may possibly be pre-Pauline. Note the unusual linking of justification with the resurrection of Christ rather than his death. The first line reflects the language concerning the Suffering Servant in the LXX of Is 53, particularly v.12.

Wright argues that διὰ with the accusative means 'because of' or 'on account of'. This fits well with the first half of the verse, but what does it mean that he 'was raised because of our justification'? Having argued that Paul has in mind here Isaiah 53, Wright comments, "First, the servant of Isaiah 53 is raised to new life after his vicarious death (53:10b-12); his task then, as God's righteous one, is 'to make many righteous' (v. 11, alluded to in Rom 5:18-19). Carrying this meaning into Romans 4, as the allusion invites us to do, would suggest that Jesus' resurrection took place 'because of our justification' in the sense of 'because God intended thereby to justify us.' This is not exactly parallel in meaning to 'because of our trespasses' in the first half of the verse, unless, of course, Paul there means 'he was handed over because God intended thereby to deal with our trespasses.' But it is not necessary to insist on a strict parallelism of content."

Oliver O'Donovan comments, "When St Paul in the Epistle to the Romans describes Christ as 'given up for our sins and raised for our vindication' (4:25), he has, of course, Israel's sin and vindication in mind. Fulfilling the promises that Abraham believed in, Christ represents Israel equally in both moments of the Paschal crisis, and becomes a new focus of identity for those who inherit Abraham's faith." *The Desire of the Nations*, p. 141.

Romans 5-8

"Paul's exposition of the gospel of Jesus Christ takes a decisive turn at 5:1. Up to this point, his focus has been on the power of the gospel to put people who are locked up in sin and under sentence of God's wrath into a right relationship with God. Through the preaching of the good news, God invites all people – Jew and Gentile alike – to believe in Christ and enter into this new relationship. Now Paul turns his attention to what comes after one's justification by faith. Chapters 5-8 focus on two matters in particular: the certainty we can have that our justification will lead to final salvation, and the new power God gives us in our continuing struggle against sin and the law. "The first theme – what theologians call 'assurance' – dominates the first (5:1-11) and last (8:18-39) paragraphs in these chapters. These two sections frame the argument of Romans 5-8, forming what we call an *inclusio*. The famous argument about Adam and Christ (5:12-21) grounds the claim for assurance in 5:1-11. Then, in chapters 6-7, Paul deals with two continuing threats to our assurance: sin and the law. In 8:1-17 he shows how the work of God's Spirit overcomes these threats." Moo.

Wright argues that chapters 5-8 focus on the theme of *glorification*, or future glory: "The whole passage ... emphasises that what God did decisively in Jesus the Messiah is now to be implemented by the Spirit. Paul points to ways in which the Christian's present status and future hope determine life in the present, but the real theme is the secure future. All is guaranteed by the unshakable love of God – which is in turn demonstrated in the death of Jesus (5:6-10; 8:31-39). This is the argument that emerges from the surface of chaps. 5-8. "Beneath the surface, however, and poking out like the tips of a huge iceberg at various key points, there runs a different theme, not often noticed... Paul, I suggest, is telling the story of the people of the Messiah in terms of the new exodus. Jesus' people are the liberated people, on their way home to their promised land."

The themes of slavery and freedom are prominent. Wright argues that Paul may have had Jer 23:5-8 particularly in mind with its themes of the Messiah, the righteousness of God and the new exodus. With Paul, the promise of the land has been refined into the promise of inheriting the whole cosmos (4:13; 8:18-25). "My proposal is that the journey that ends in chap. 8 with the glorious inheritance began in chap. 6 with the new covenant version of the crossing of the Red Sea [baptism], the event through which the slaves are set free." The reason for returning to the theme of law in chapter 7 "is that he is following the storyline. After the Red Sea, and before the journey to the promised inheritance, comes Mt Sinai and the giving of the Torah." Wright adds, "This sequence of thought is opened up initially with four paragraphs of very similar length (5:1-11, 12-21; 6:1-11, 12-23), each rounded off with a christological formula that is not just added on for effect but sums up the paragraph."

Romans 5:1-11

Verses 1-11 focus on the hope of final salvation, see. vv 2b, 5a, 9,10. Justification is a past and present reality and also an eschatological pronouncement. Wright comments, "The first paragraph of the new section states and develops the theme that overarches the next four chapters: those whom God justified, God also glorified. In typical fashion, this is stated densely to start with (5:1-2). It is then developed with two new elements, suffering and the Spirit (5:3-5), explained and grounded (in the death of the Messiah) (5:6-9), and finally further explained and celebrated (5:10-11). As usual, Paul's successive explanations do not add new points to the opening summary, but rather explore what is contained by implication within it. "The theme is that of inaugurated eschatology. God has accomplished the justification of sinners; God will therefore complete the task, saving those already justified from the coming wrath (cf. Phil 1:6: when God begins a work, God will complete it). God's decisive disclosure of covenant faithfulness in the death of the Messiah (3:21-4:25) is now expressed in equally covenantal language, that of God's love (5:8). The argument is simple: if God loved sinners enough for the Son to die for them, God will surely complete what was begun at such cost. Those who have left Egypt will be brought to Canaan, even though suffering awaits them on the journey. Part of Christian assurance is learning to tell the story and to understand its inner logic.

"... All that God said to Abraham, all that God accomplished in the Messiah, was done out of love, and designed to call out an answering love. The intimacy and ecstasy of 5:1-11 are a necessary further dimension of justification by faith."

Verse 1

Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

"Justification results in peace with God, in access to God's loving favour, and thereby, unstoppably, to the hope of glory." Wright.

δικαιωθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
δικαιω justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous

ἔχομεν Textual evidence would seem to be stronger for the subjunctive, ἔχωμεν. However, the subjunctive does not fit well with Paul's argument or his theology. Metzger suggests that this error may have crept in at the earliest possible stage of transmission: "When Paul dictated ἔχομεν, Tertius, his amanuensis (16:22), may have written down ἔχωμεν."

εἰρήνη, ἡς f peace

This peace is objective in nature (see Barrett, Murray, Moo): it is not *mere* feeling, it is a state of peace instituted by God himself into which we have entered and from which the *enjoyment* of peace flows. Cf. Is 32:17-18.

Wright comments, "God's justice has led to peace: the echoes of the world Paul was addressing are strong. Augustus Caesar had established the Roman *Pax*, founded on *Iustia*. His successors, enjoying among their titles 'Lord' and 'Saviour,' maintained the powerful imperial myth not least through the imperial cult. Paul is revealing to his Roman audience a different justice, a different peace, in virtue of a different Lord and a different God: the God of Abraham, the world's creator, who has now established peace 'through our Lord Jesus Christ.' This peace, the first characteristic Paul mentions of the present tense of salvation, includes the deeply personal reconciliation between each believer and the true God, but can hardly stop there; already Paul is sowing the seeds for that communal peace he longs to see come about in the whole Roman church (14:1-15:14; see esp. 14:17, 19), the work, indeed, is of 'the God of peace' (15:33; 16:20). It is this peace, embracing alike each person and the whole community, that reveals to the wider world the existence and nature of the alternative empire, set up through the true Lord, the Messiah. In one short verse Paul manages to articulate the heart of Christian personal experience and the politically subversive nature of Christian loyalty."

Verse 2

δι' οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχίκαμεν τῇ πίστει εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ἣ ἐστήκαμεν, καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ·
προσαγωγή, ης f freedom or right to enter
ἐσχίκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl ἔχω

τῇ πίστει the evidence for inclusion is not strong. The sense is not materially altered either way.

χάρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

Murray understands τὴν χάριν ταύτην as a reference to justification. The sense is perhaps more general – acceptance with God and all that flows from it. Wright says that "The metaphor envisages grace as a room into which Jesus has ushered all who believe. A room where they now 'stand,' a place characterised by the presence and sustaining love of God. Just as the Temple symbolised and actualised Israel's meeting with the gracious God, so now Jesus has effected such a meeting between his God and all who approach by faith."

ἐστήκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl ἵστημι
pf stand, stand firm

καυχασθαι boast, boast about, take
confidence in, rejoice, celebrate

ἐλπίς, ιδος f hope, ground of hope

δόξα, ης f glory

The ultimate hope is to see and share in God's glory, cf. 8:18, 21, 30; also Col 1:27. "Adam's lost glory (3:23) is regained in the Messiah: not simply dazzling beauty, but the status and task of being God's vicegerent over creation." Wright. Cf. 8:18-27.

Verse 3

οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν, εἰδότες ὅτι ἡ θλίψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται,

θλίψις, εως f trouble, suffering

See 2 Cor 11:23-30; 12:9,10. The peace we have with God does not preclude suffering, cf. Jn 16:33. "This suffering, though, is to be understood as part of a larger story that again ends with hope." Wright.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
(verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand

It is not the trials themselves which are the source of joy, but they become an occasion for joy through the logic of faith expounded here. "Just as resistance to a muscle strengthens it." Moo.

ὑπομονή, ης f patience, endurance

This is not a passive quality, as we often think of *patience*; the sense is rather that of *endurance* or *continuance*, cf. 2 Thess 1:4. It is "staying put without dismay." Wright.

κατεργάζομαι accomplish, bring about

Verse 4

ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ δοκιμὴν, ἡ δὲ δοκιμὴ ἐλπίδα.

δοκιμή, ης f character

δοκιμή the triedness or state of approval which is consequent upon testing. Hendriksen translates it as 'proven character', cf. 2 Cor 2:9; 8:2; 13:3; Phil 2:22.

Verse 5

ἡ δὲ ἐλπίς οὐ καταισχύνει· ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν.

καταισχυνω put to shame, disappoint, let
down

ἀγάπη του θεου is God's love for us. The objective ground for our hope is God's love for us demonstrated in Christ and communicated to us by the Holy Spirit. However, Wright says that the ambiguity may be deliberate and that the Spirit's work of prompting in us a responsive love for God (cf. 8:28) should not be excluded. Cf. the *Shema* of Deut 6:4-5. He adds, "To realise that this love fulfils the central command of Torah is to discover oneself to be a member of the renewed people of God."

ἐκκέχυται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἐκχεω
and ἐκχυννω pour out

Signifies an abundant measure. "This verb is used to describe the 'pouring out' of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18). Paul therefore cleverly alludes to the Spirit here." Moo.

δοθέντος Verb, aor pass ptc, m & n gen s
διδωμι

The gift of the Holy Spirit now is the pledge and proof of the completed salvation for which we hope (cf. Rom 8:23).