

Romans Session 111

The Holy Spirit Guarantees Our Glory

Romans 8:19-22 (NASB)

¹⁹ *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.*

²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope*

²¹ *that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*

²² *For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.*

Paul in writing to the Roman Church has been focusing on the Glory that will be ours when our redemption is complete. And he says we anticipate that Glory. Not only that but all creation anticipates that glory. And he goes on to talk about the groanings of creation.

Again, groanings are an audible expression of anguish do to physical, emotional, or spiritual pain. They bewail a condition that is painful, unsatisfying and sorrowful, a cry for deliverance from a torturing experience.

Thus, the verses we have before us tonight.

The first groan is the personified lament coming from the created universe as it now exists in the corrupted condition caused by the Fall.

Apokaradokia (anxious longing) is an especially vivid word that literally refers to watching with outstretched head and suggests standing on tiptoes with the eyes looking ahead with intent expectancy.

The prefix *apo* adds the idea of fixed absorption and concentration on that which is anticipated.

The creation is standing on tiptoes, as it were, as it **waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.**

Jews were familiar with God's promise of a redeemed world, a renewed **creation.**

On behalf of the Lord, Isaiah predicted;

Isaiah 65:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.*

The Jews anticipated a glorious time when all pain, oppression, slavery, anxiety, sorrow, and persecution would end, and the Lord would establish His own perfect kingdom of peace and righteousness.

Even non-biblical Jewish writings reflect that longing.

The apocalypse of Baruch describes and expected and long-awaited future utopia:

The vine shall yield its fruit ten thousand-fold, and on each vine, there shall be a thousand branches; and each cluster produce a thousand grapes; and each grape a cor of wine.

And those who have hungered shall rejoice; moreover, also, they shall behold marvels every day. For winds shall go forth from before me to bring every morning the fragrance of aromatic fruits, and at the close of the day clouds distilling the dews of health (29.5)

Jewish sections of Sibylline Oracles record similar expectations.

And earth and all the trees, and the innumerable flocks of sheep shall give their true fruit to mankind, of wine and of sweet honey an of white milk and of corn, which to men is the most excellent gift of all (3:620-33)

And later in the oracles it says;

Earth, the universal mother, shall give to mortals her best fruit in countless store of corn, wine and oil. Yea, from heaven shall come a sweet draught of luscious honey. The trees shall yield their proper fruits, and rich flocks, and kine, and lambs of sheep and kids of goats. He will cause sweet fountains of white milk to burst forth. And the cities shall be full of good things, and the fields rich; neither shall there be any sword throughout the land or battle-din; nor shall the earth be convulsed any more, nor shall there be any more drought throughout the land, no famine, or hail to work havoc on the crops (3:744-56)

Now creation here does not include the heavenly angels, who, although created beings, are not subject to corruption; the term also does not include Satan and his host of fallen angels, the demons.

They have no desire for a godly, sinless state and know they are divinely sentenced to eternal torment. Believers are not included in that term either, because they are mentioned separately in verses 23-25.

Nor is Paul referring to unbelievers. The only remaining part of **creation** is the nonrational part, including animals and plants and all inanimate things such as the mountains, rivers, plains, seas, and heavenly bodies.

Jews were familiar with such a personification of nature. Isaiah had used it when he wrote that;

Isaiah 35:1 (NASB)

¹*The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus*

Isaiah 55:12 (NASB)

¹²*“For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*

Let’s take the next two words, **“Waits Eagerly”** this translates a form of the verb *apekdechomai*, which refers to waiting in great anticipation but with patience.

The form of the Greek word gives the added connotations of readiness, preparedness, and continuance until the expected event occurs.

The next word we want to look at is the word **“revealing”** which translates *apokalupsis*, which refers to an uncovering, or unveiling, or revelation.

It is the word from which the English name of the book of Revelation is derived. The world does not comprehend who Christians really are.

In his first epistle, John explained,

1 John 3:1 (NASB)

¹*See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*

In the present age, the world is unable to distinguish absolutely between Christians and nonbelievers. People who call themselves Christians walk, dress, and talk much like everyone else.

Many unbelievers have high standards of behavior. On the other hand, unfortunately, many professing Christians give little evidence of salvation.

But at the appointed time God will reveal those who are truly His.

At the revealing of the sons of God,

Colossians 3:4 (NASB)

⁴When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

At that time, all believers will be eternally separated from sin and their unredeemed humanness, to be glorified with Christ's own holiness and splendor.

When Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God's command, not only mankind but the earth and all the rest of the world was cursed and corrupted. After the Fall, God said to Adam;

Genesis 3:17-19 (NASB)

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Before the fall, no weeds or poisonous plants, no thorns or thistles or anything else existed that could cause man misery or harm.

But after the fall, **the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it.**

Mataiotes (futility) carries the idea of being without success, of being unable to achieve a goal, or purpose.

Because of man's sin, no part of nature now exists as God intended it to be and as it originally was.

The verb **was subjected** indicates by its form that nature did not curse itself but was cursed by something or someone else.

Paul goes on to reveal that the curse on nature was executed by its Creator. God Himself **subjected it** to futility.

Although various environmental organizations and government agencies today make noble attempts to protect and restore natural resources and regions, they are helpless to turn the tide of corruptions that has continually devastated both man and his environment since the Fall.

Such is the destructiveness of sin that one man's disobedience brought corruption to the entire universe.

Decay, disease, pain, death, natural disaster, pollution, and all other forms of evil will never cease until the One who sent the curse removes it and creates a new heaven and a new earth

2 Peter 3:13 (NASB)

¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Revelation 21:1 (NASB)

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

No less a naturalist than John Muir was in serious error when he wrote that nature is “un-fallen” and “un-depraved” and that only man is a blighting touch.

The sentimental environmentalists of our time advocate living in some relaxed and easy “harmony with nature” Some are crying for the government to take us back to living in the Dark Ages, when they assume, people and nature were in harmony.

All the corruptions of this fallen environment were different in the past from what technology and industry have wrought, but perhaps even more deadly.

Certainly, disease and death, as well as exposure to the natural elements and disasters, were much greater in the past. And when people were supposedly living nearer nature, they had less comfort, more pain, harder times, more disease and died younger.

This is not a friendly earth but a violent and dangerous one. It is a ridiculous fantasy to think it is not cursed and that it naturally yields a comfortable life.

In spite of this curse, however, much of the beauty, grandeur, and benefits of the natural world remains. Although they all deteriorate, flowers are still beautiful, mountains are still grand, forests are still magnificent, the heavenly bodies are still majestic, food still brings nourishment to some degree, and is a pleasure to eat, and water still brings refreshment and sustains life.

Despite the terrible curse that He inflicted on the earth, God’s majesty and gracious provision for mankind is still evident wherever one looks. It is for that reason that no person has an excuse for not believing in God.

Romans 1:20 (NASB)

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Nature’s destiny is inseparably linked with man’s.

Because man sinned, the rest of **creation** was corrupted with him.

Likewise, when man’s glory is divinely restored, the natural world will be restored as well.

Therefore, Paul says, there is **hope** even for the natural creation itself, which will **be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.**

In other words, just as man’s sin brought corruption to the universe, so man’s restoration to righteousness will be accompanied by the restoration of the earth and its universe to their divinely intended perfections and glory.

In physics, the law of entropy refers to the constant and irreversible degradation of matter and energy in the universe to increasing disorder.

That law contradicts the theory of evolution, which is based on the premise that the natural world is inclined to continual self-improvement.

But it is evident even in a simple garden plot that, when it is untended, it deteriorates. Weeds and other undesirable plants will choke out the good ones.

The natural bent of the universe, whether of humans, animals, plants, or the inanimate elements of the earth and heavens, is obviously and demonstrably downward, not upward. It could not be other wise while the world remains in **slavery to the corruption** of sin.

We will go forward with this study next time.