



The Epistle to the Romans

Lesson Number 26



SUFFERING is the PRELUDE to GLORY

8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits 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 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.— Romans 8:18-27 ^{NKJV}

INTRODUCTION

ADJUSTING OUR FOCUS

The eighth chapter of Romans is a Divinely appointed means of adjusting our spiritual focus, or tuning our spiritual perspective. It clarifies the **nature** of salvation as well as its marvelous provisions. After we have been confronted with the world and all of its delusions, this wonderful chapter causes us to look upward, where our Lord resides.

NO CONDEMNATION

After we have grappled with the law of sin within our members, and experienced the frustrations that attend the fierce inward war brought on by faith, we are told *“There is therefore now no condemnation”* (8:1). Without that

precious facet of understanding, the warfare would soon get the best of us.

FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN

The flesh presses us relentlessly, demanding its own way, and aggressively seeking to once again dominate us. In mercy, the Lord reveals through this chapter that *“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”* has made us *“free from the law of sin and death”* (8:2). We have no obligation to *“the flesh,”* and can confidently refuse its demands.

SIN HAS BEEN CONDEMNED

Sin looms before us like Goliath, seeking to intimidate us. Using our prior sins, the devil can harass us with our past,

dredging up transgressions that have been forgiven. He craftily reminds us we are capable of doing those things again, and seeks to lure us back to living in the flesh. His advances are thwarted when we lay hold of the Word. The Spirit affirms God was in Christ and has *“condemned sin in the flesh,”* robbing it of its power (8:3).

CLARIFYING CARNALITY

The religious world beats upon our ears with a compromising message that makes allowances for the flesh. It offers explanations for living beneath the privileges of salvation, and makes provision for a spiritual life that lacks commitment and advancement. However, as we pay heed to this choice chapter,

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. THE CONSIDERATION OF FAITH (8:18)
- II. CREATION IS WAITING (8:19)
- III. THE EXTENT OF THE CURSE (8:20)
- IV. CREATION TO BE RELEASED (8:21)
- V. ALL CREATION IS INVOLVED (8:22)
- VI. FELLOWSHIP IN GROANING (8:23)
- VII. THE CRITICAL ROLE OF HOPE (8:24-25)
- VIII. HELP IN OUR IGNORANCE (8:26)
- IX. EFFECTIVE INTERCESSION (8:27)

heaven shouts to us, *“For to be carnally minded is death . . . the carnal mind is enmity against God . . . they that are in the flesh cannot please God”* (8:6-8). It brings us back to the understanding that no provision whatsoever has been made in Christ for following the dictates of the flesh or being carnally minded.

BELIEVERS HAVE THE ADVANTAGE

When the old serpent tempts us to imagine we are not equal to the rigors of spiritual warfare, we are told *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you,”* and *“if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life*

because of righteousness,” and *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you”* (8:9-11). The heavenly Helper has been assigned to us, to bring us through the morass of sin, and land us safely on the shores of glory.

AN AGGRESSIVE STANCE

When the devil tempts us to imagine an aggressive spiritual stance is not necessary, we read, *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live”* (8:13). The Spirit will lead us in a victorious battle against the flesh, like God led Israel against mighty Jericho, and David against Goliath.

In all of these matters, life in Christ is seen more clearly, thereby enabling the child of God to wage effective war, and live a productive spiritual life.

ONLY THE BEGINNING

The bulk of the privileges and involvements related to our sonship are ahead of us. In this world, we have, at best, only been introduced to them. The passage before us will refer to our present participation in God’s *“great salvation”* as the *“firstfruits of the Spirit”* (v 23).

THE ROLE OF SUFFERING

While the saints remain in these bodies (and consequently in this world), sufferings constitute a major part of their

experience. A primary facet of these sufferings was introduced in the seventh chapter, which elaborated on our struggle with the flesh. The Spirit will now deal with the whole range of sufferings that have resulted from our identify with Christ Jesus.

We have already been introduced to this in the verse preceding this section: *“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together [with Him]”* (verse 17). **There is a sense in which a glorified future depends upon successfully negotiating through present sufferings.** The real issue for believers is NOT whether they will suffer or not, but whether they will survive the suffering.

For this reason, the Spirit will now reveal the extensiveness of the help God gives us in these sufferings. He will also confirm they are vastly inferior to what we will receive in the future. He will even show us that we have joined a great chorus of suffering that is rising from the realm of the curse.

Generally, this section of Scripture is little known to the saints of God. It simply does not fit well into an institutional agenda. Further, this exposition of suffering is in sharp conflict with the psychological approach that has been popularized in our day. Once declared, however, the glory of the truth will be at once seen by those who believe.

THE CONSIDERATION OF FAITH

“^{8:18} For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” As with all Scripture, this passage is not the personal interpretation of the writer. It is ever true, *“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”*^{NIV} (2 Pet 1:20-21). The fact that Paul says *“I consider,”* does not mean this view originated with him, or

that it is a mere human opinion. From heaven’s point of view, this is a revelation given to Paul for the edification of the saints. From the human point of view, this is a deduction produced by faith, that is *“common”* to all saints (Tit 1:4). It is essential that we perceive this, else the passage will lose its significance to us, and be robbed of its Divine power.

CONSIDERING

“For I consider . . .” The KJV reads, *“For Ireckon.”* Some rather liberal paraphrases read with alarming

weakness. *“I am of the opinion,”*^{BBE} and *“In my estimation.”*^{NJB}

Let it be clear that *“reckoning,”* or *“considering,”* is not a mere human exercise, or effort to analyze. In Scripture, considering is not a facet of human logic, but an aspect of faith. It involves reasoning, but not mere reasoning. **It is rationale based upon revelation.** While the things of God conflict with the worldly mindset, they are not irrational or unreasonable. Faith has a reasoning of its own, and *“reckoning,”* or *“considering”* involves arriving at conclusions mandated

by faith. **It is thinking that results from believing**—and believing God does impact upon the way we think! Admittedly, this removes glory from man, but that is needful.

The word from which “reckon” or “consider” is translated is λογίζομαι, which etymologically means *count, reckon, calculate, consider, think, suppose, or evaluate*. Linguistically, it is *thinking according to logical rules*.^{Liddell-Scott Lexicon} However impressive these definitions may appear, they do not tell the whole story.

In Scripture, reckoning is based upon revelation, not human logic. It is an expression of faith, not of mere human nature. This reckoning or considering is also a spiritual conclusion. The book of Romans frequently uses the word in this manner.

- ❑ “Therefore **we conclude** that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law” (3:28).
- ❑ “Likewise **reckon ye also yourselves** to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:11).
- ❑ The word is also used in the book of Hebrews to describe how faith moved Abraham to reason. **“Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure”** (Heb 11:19).

In each of these passages, the reasoning contradicts what appears to be, and violates the manner in which flesh thinks. The conclusion that man is justified “without the deeds of the Law” violates the human way of thinking, but perfectly conforms to the logic of faith. Considering ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God contradicts thinking that is based upon experience, yet strictly comports with the rationale of faith. For Abraham to determine to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to God in hope that God would raise him from the dead defied every form of human reasoning. Yet, it was impeccably accurate for the reasoning patterns of faith.

What is here affirmed is not an

appeal to mere human reason. Rather, it is a Divine affirmation made to faith. This does reflect the reasoning of Paul, but only because he had faith. It is not the conclusion of Paul the scholar, but Paul the believer. For this reason, every person in Christ can arrive at the same conclusion. Because of this, they can be both comforted and strengthened by reasoning in this manner.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME

“ . . . *the sufferings of this present time* . . . ” There are at least three senses in which “this present time” is used.

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- ❑ First, it refers to the period of time itself, sandwiched between eternity past and eternity future.
- ❑ Second, it pertains to the period of time during which we live by faith—the period between our new birth and our glorification.
- ❑ Third, it relates to what believers are presently experiencing—today, and at this present time.

All three views are relevant to our spiritual understanding. The first teaches us to properly evaluate life itself. The second instructs us concerning life in Christ Jesus. The third helps us to properly evaluate what we are presently experiencing. This is a statement made for all believers of all time.

Sufferings Induced By Faith

These are sufferings brought on by faith, NOT sufferings common to all humanity, or miseries experienced in the routines of normal life (i.e., sickness,

calamity, etc.).

These sufferings range from bloody persecution and social ostracization, to inner turmoil and conflict with our own flesh. All of them are very real, and all of them are limited to our time in “*this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4). **Persecution and rejection** are the result of becoming citizens of another world (Phil 3:20; John 15:19), and receiving a nature that is in sharp conflict with the spirit of this world (2 Cor 5:17). **Inner turmoil and conflict with the flesh** are the result of possessing a “*new man*” and an “*old man*” simultaneously (Eph 4:22-24) – a “*spiritual man*” and a “*natural man*” at the same time (1 Cor 2:14-15).

Both of these conditions – the outward and the inward – produce “*sufferings*.” These are afflictions that are painful, and hardships that chaff against the soul. By their very nature they can cause discouragement, sorrow, and spiritual stupidity. Under the stress of suffering, many a believer has been moved to think incorrectly. When suffering, some have even thought believing and serving God were not worth going through such grief, and have therefore went back to the past like a dog to its vomit.

Multitudes of believers live in a state of constant confusion and frustration because they cannot account for the difficulties they endure. “*The sufferings of this present time*,” though they may differ in intensity and type, are common to us all. We need the perspective of faith to be able to endure them.

NOT WORTHY OF COMPARISON

“ . . . *are not worthy to be compared* . . . ” You might call this **comparative thinking**. In order to obtain a proper view, one thing is compared with another. It is critical that we know how to make such comparisons. We are not, for example, to compare ourselves with other people (2 Cor 10:12). Consequently, our sufferings are NOT to be compared with the sufferings of others.

Although such comparisons are common (i.e., “We have not suffered as much as the martyrs of old,” . . . etc.), it is

not proper for such analogies to be made. One may imagine they will yield a thankful spirit, but they rarely do. They are too shallow. Experiences in time are not to be compared with one another.

By saying “*worthy*,” the Spirit is not ascribing one level of worthiness to sufferings and another level to glory. It is the comparison itself that is “*not worthy*.” The purpose is to lighten the cross by affirming sufferings are NOTHING compared to glory. They seem significant, but they are not: they are “*nothing*.” They are not “*nothing*” because they do not hurt, but because they will not be remembered when we are delivered from time and this present evil world.

This type of reasoning (which is really the only proper way to reason) postulates that God’s people live with “*the world to come*” in view. They are fundamentally other-worldly, and not of this world. A worldly minded people simply cannot think in the manner of our text. In fact, such thinking is foolishness to those whose roots are not in eternity.

GLORY REVEALED IN US

“*... with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*” There are different views of this text presented in the various translations. The first affirms glory will be revealed “*IN us*” (KJV, NKJV, NIV, NIB, WEBSTERS, DUOAY-RHEIMS, YLT). Another view is reflected in the words “*to us-ward*,”^{ASV} “*to us*,”^{NASB} and “*disclosed for us*.”^{NJB} Yet another view places the emphasis on a future time: “*in the future*,”^{BBE} and “*give us later*.”^{NLT}

Let it be clear, the saints of God will not be mere spectators, as is suggested by some of these meager translations. Whatever justification may be presented for saying the glory will be revealed “to us,” that cannot be the intent of the words. Those who suffer are experiencing the suffering, and they will also experience the glory. If this is not the case, these words can bring us no comfort.

Glory Is Now In Us

These words posit that glory is presently “*in us*,” but has not yet been revealed. It is veiled, or hidden, by our flesh. The Scriptures confirm this is actually the case—i.e., we presently have glory. The intensity of this glory has not

yet reached its pinnacle. We are presently being changed “*from one degree of glory to another*” by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). Even now, when we are “*reproached for the name of Christ*,” “*the spirit of glory and of God*” rests, or resides, on us (1 Pet 4:14). In his address to elders, Peter affirmed he was “*a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed*” with them (1 Pet 5:1).

Glorified Bodies

Just as the glory of Jesus was hidden by His flesh, so the present and initial glory of the saints is hidden by their flesh. But it will not remain hidden. Who we really are will eventually be made known to the complete consternation of our enemies. “*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory*” (Col 3:4). Then we will be clothed in a “*glorious body*,” free from weakness and inaccessible to our foes (Phil 3:21).



The Realm of Glory

When those in Christ are “*glorified*,” according to Divine appointment (Rom 8:30), they will be perfectly suited for the realm of glory. That is the realm to which God has called us (1 Pet 5:10), and to which Jesus is bringing us (Heb 2:10).

“*Glory*” is the realm where God is obvious to all, and there are no competitors. It is where perfection exists in all of its inhabitants, and where there is no conflict, sorrow, or regrets.

The **realm** of glory awaits those who now participate in Divine glory. Both the realm and the participants will soon be revealed. That revelation will be made

known when the Lord Jesus is revealed in all of His glory. It is then that the people of God will become obvious. As it is written, “*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*” (1 John 3:2). The appearance of Christ is not simply visibility, but when He will be seen as He really is. In the blaze of His glory, those in whom God’s glory now resides will become “*glorified*,” with every vestige of the curse once and for all removed.

GLORY MUST BE CONSIDERED

When the Spirit says our present sufferings “*are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us*,” He is not saying a comparison of suffering with glory is not to be made. Rather, due consideration of glory will produce the comparison, verifying the smallness of our sufferings, and enabling us to endure them. As we ponder the coming glory that will be made known “*in us*,” the weight of our sufferings will diminish. This is precisely the point made in Second Corinthians 4:16-17. “*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*”^{NIV}

Troubles and afflictions are not “*light*” unless they are offset in the scales of consideration by the coming glory! Whether we ponder the inner warfare of Romans Seven, or the tribulations of Romans Five, the contemplation of glory will reduce their weight, tipping the scales in our favor.

The saints must not be deprived of this perspective! Let it be clear that such deprivation takes place when the minds of believers are pushed to consider the affairs and experiences of this world. If we are basically citizens of heaven, then we need to hear about the homeland! If our lives are “*hid with Christ in God*” (Col 3:3), then we must hear more about them both! Too long the church has been pummeled with stones of worldly thought. The glories of the world to come, and the glory that will be revealed in us has been withheld by spiritual midgets attired with academic robes. The result of this is an

anemic and confused church.

All of this may appear negative and unduly critical. However, in the light of passage before us, I have actually been very lenient in my assessment of contemporary teaching and preaching. The present condition of the church is

largely the result of the diet it has been given. It has been sadly lacking in both quantity and quality. But this does not need to continue.

Men and women of God can rise up and declare the glories to come, and the marvelous benefits that await the sons

and daughters of the most high God. When faith takes hold of these good words, sufferings will at once become tolerable. They will be lightened and zeal will be increased. Gladness will be enhanced, hope will flourish, and faith will grow, bringing glory to God. Boldness and confidence will also flourish.

CREATION IS WAITING

⁴¹⁹ ***For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*** The Spirit now widens our perspective of salvation, showing it to be far more extensive than unassisted reasoning can fathom. Other versions read, ***“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God,”*** ^{NASB} ***“The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed,”*** ^{NIV} ***“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God,”*** ^{NRSV} ***“For the strong desire of every living thing is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God,”*** ^{BBE} ***“For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.”*** ^{NLT} The greatness of the text, then, should be obvious.

THE CREATION

Because sin brought a curse upon the entirety of creation, all of it is involved in redemption. The word “creation,” or “creature,” KJV refers to everything that has been created, or made. To be more specific, it is everything created by God. It does **not** refer to the works of men. Both the animate and the inanimate are included—the sub total of God’s creation. Scriptural phrases that connote the whole creation are as follows.

- ❑ *“The heavens and the earth . . . and all the host of them”* (Gen 2:1).
- ❑ *“The things that are in heaven, and in the earth!”* (Psa 113:6).
- ❑ *“The heaven and the earth, and all that is therein. . .”* (Jer 51:48).
- ❑ *“. . . heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is. . .”* (Ex 20:11).
- ❑ *“. . . heaven, and earth, and the sea,*

and all that in them is . . .” (Acts 4:24).

The creation includes the firmament, or airy heavens. A immense array of stars, planets, galaxies, and other celestial bodies are included in the creation. There are waters and land, together with minerals and a vast array of stones and formations. Ponder the massive variety of vegetation, or seed bearing plants and trees. There are heavenly bodies, some of which emit light. There are creatures that live in the waters, fowls that fly in the air, creatures that walk upon the earth, others that crawl upon the earth, and still others that live underground. The immensity and variety of creation is staggering. All of this, and possibly more, are involved in this text.

and shown to have an immediate association with our own circumstance.

EAGERLY WAITING

It is the “*earnest expectation*” of the creation that “*eagerly waits.*” This involves fervent desire and anxious anticipation. It is something that cannot be quenched, and has been prompted by a form of revelation or intuition that is unknown to the sons of men. No matter how expert men become in the natural sciences, it is utterly impossible to arrive at the knowledge of this expectation apart from the Word of God. If He had not told us of this universal anticipation and longing, it could never have been known by us.

Why Mention This Expectation?

There is good reason for mentioning the earnest expectation of the whole creation. Hope has been affirmed to be a compelling incentive for the child of God. In contradiction of all human hope, our father Abraham “*in hope believed*” (4:18). When the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, hope becomes dominant, and the child of God is not ashamed of it (5:5).

The Spirit has also declared the role of perseverance and patience in the life of faith. Eternal life will be given to those who “*by*

patient continuance seek for glory, honor, and immortality” (2:7). He has reminded us that “***tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance character, and character hope***” (5:3-5).

Now, in order to encourage us to be steadfast and unmoveable, the Spirit

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EARNEST EXPECTATION

The entire creation, animate and inanimate, are eagerly anticipating something. More than dependability and consistency are found in the impersonal creation. There is an ardent sense of expectancy that fills the whole creation. This expectation will now be developed,

asseverates we are surrounded by an entire creation that is patiently and hopefully enduring. For over six millennia the “*whole creation*” has been in a state of expectancy. Further, it has maintained that eager longing amidst the precise execution of its varied roles. Day and night, together with seasons and years, have faithfully been maintained while creation remains in a state of eager longing. What are a few short decades of our patience compared to that?

THE REVELATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

What is it that the whole creation is looking forward to and longing for? It is the revealing, or manifestation, of “*the sons of God*” –“who His children really are.” ^{NLT}

This certainly does not pertain to the angelic hosts, who are called “*the sons of God*” in the book of Job (1:6; 2:1; 38:7). The creation knows who the angels are, for they presently exercise authority over the creation. There is “*the angel in charge of the waters*”^{NIV} (Rev 16:5), another who has “*charge of the fire*” (Rev 14:18), and others who can hold back “*the four winds of earth*” (Rev 7:1). One angel authoritatively stood on the land and sea simultaneously (Rev 10:8-9). No, the revelation of the angels is not what the whole creation is waiting for!

The creation is waiting for the manifestation for those who are sons by “*adoption*”–the ones who have received the “*Spirit of adoption*” (8:15). These are the ones who are “*led by the Spirit of God*” (8:14). By virtue of their faith, they have been granted the right to “*become the sons of God*” (John 1:12). These are the premier people in the earth–the ones who are recognized and singularly blessed by God Almighty. The Almighty God refers to them as “*my sons and daughters*” (2 Cor 6:18).

Presently, these “*sons and daughters*” are incognito: that is, their identity is concealed. Only those within the family of God have any capacity to recognize these privileged people–and even some of them have considerable difficulty doing so. According to

appearance, they seem no different than other people, even though they are “*heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*” (8:17). Their sins have been forgiven, but there is no tangible proof that this is so. Their names have been written in the Lamb’s book of life, but you cannot determine this by their appearance.

It is certain that “*the whole creation*” is unable to detect these “*sons of God*.” When God created man, He placed all things under him. He made man “*a little lower than the angels*,” crowned him with “*glory and honor*,” and “*set him*

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over the works of His hands.” Nothing was omitted from this Divine subjugation: “*For in that he put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.*” However, with the entrance of sin, an interim period was introduced during which “*we see not yet all things put under him*” (Heb 2:7-8). Creation is serviceable to man, but is not in thorough subjection to him (Gen 9:2-3).

Jesus Is The Pledge

The appointed subjection, however is slated for the future, and will come to pass. In the meantime, a pledge of the privilege to be vouchsafed to men is seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it is written, “*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by*

whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb 2:9-10). When He was among us, the winds and the waves obeyed Him. Trees withered at His command, and a fish delivered a coin to Peter at a word from Jesus. Now that He is exalted at the right hand of God, His reign is even more extensive, and is absolutely unquestioned.

The Sons Are Being Prepared

Presently, the Lord Jesus is preparing the sons of God to assume the rule with Him–i.e., “*joint heirs*.” That is one of the primary reasons for bringing them to glory. In sanctification through His blood, Jesus has set the sons aside for Divine employment. In practical sanctification, He is separating them from this world, and giving them familiarity with heavenly manners and purposes.

Christ’s intercessory ministry is not simply to get them through this world, but to prepare them for “*the world to come*.” It has been determined that they will be given “*the kingdom*” (Dan 7:18,22,27), and they are presently being readied for it. Jesus promised the Father would give His disciples a kingdom. “*And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*” (Luke 22:29-30). That kingdom was not limited to the Apostles, for “*the saints will judge the world*,” and “*angels*” as well (1 Cor 6:2-3). Our walk with Jesus here is preparing us for a reign with Jesus there.

The Time of Revelation

The revelation of the sons of God will occur when the Lord Jesus Christ, the “*only begotten Son*,” is revealed. As it is written, “*when He appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as He is*”^{NIV} (1 John 3:2). And again, “*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory*” (Col 3:4).

It is true the sons of God are revealed in their conversion. They receive a “*new heart*” and a “*new Spirit*,” and enter a process wherein they are being

changed “from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of our God” (Ezek 36:26; 2 Cor 3:18). But this is not the revelation mentioned in our text. The evidence of the new birth is neutralized by the remaining remnants of our old nature. Too, our sonship is in the state of confirmation or

verification. The work within us has not yet been completed. A modicum of honesty will confirm this to be the case in every honest and good heart.

Until the work is finished (Rom 9:28), performed (Phil 1:6), and completed

(Col 4:12), the creation eagerly waits for the unveiling of the sons of God. If the impersonal creation, void of reason, can eagerly and patiently wait, what of those who have received “the firstfruits of the Spirit?” Will not hope sustain them even more surely than it does the creation?

THE EXTENT OF THE CURSE

“²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope.” With the vaunting of an academic approach to Scripture, the extent of the fall of man became veiled. Religious leaders began to explain sin with words of worldly wisdom. They traced it to environmental influences, disease, physiological makeup, and differences in brain waves. As a result, the emphasis was changed from preaching the Gospel to counseling, therapy, work shops, and how-to-do-it literature. The result of this academic shift confirms it was all of the devil. Those subjected to this sort of leadership are abysmally ignorant of how far man fell, and how serious sin really is.

Our text stretches our hearts and minds beyond the reach of the worldly wisdom. It moves us into the area where faith alone can apprehend the real situation. A single sin, committed only one time, has sent a wake of destruction throughout the entire universe, or “worlds” (Heb 1:2; 11:3). The entirety of the realm involved in the creation of the “heavens and the earth” became defiled. Everything God created had to die because His chief creation had sinned! Now, death not only stalks and devours humanity, but the impersonal creation as well—both animate and inanimate. Let those who think lightly of sin, finding it easy to explain it away with carnal hypotheses, ponder the effects of sin—a single sin. It will assist in freeing them from the delusion that has engulfed them. Let it be clear, no measurable victory will be gained over sin until we are persuaded of its enormity. As long as sin is regarded as minor, men will be losers.

SUBJECTED TO FUTILITY

Other versions read, “the creature was made subject to vanity,” ^{KJV} “the creation was subjected to futility,” ^{NASB} “the creation was subjected to frustration,” ^{NIV} “creation had frustration imposed on it,” ^{NJB} and “everything . . . was subjected to God’s curse.” ^{NLT}

By these words, the Spirit means the whole creation is dying. “Subjected to futility” does not mean futility is possible, but that it rules. It also means that unless God does something about the situation, nothing **can** be done.

Contrary to the purported finding of scientists, new things are not being created, but all things are in a constant state of deterioration. Nothing in the realm of nature can remain in a

made for him, and over which he was intended to have dominion. We learn from this that apart from mankind, creation has no real purpose. Not only, therefore, has man been appointed to death, he lives in a realm of death.

Solomon’s Observation

Solomon was granted unparalleled wisdom “under the sun” (Eccl 1:3,9,14; 2:11,17-22). In his consideration of the state of things, he saw “all is vanity,” or pointless (Eccl 1:2,14; 2:17; 3:19;12:9). He enunciated the truth of our text, except without sounding the note of hope.

NOT WILLINGLY

Other versions read, “not of its own will,” ^{NASB} “not by its own choice,” ^{NIV} “not by its own desire,” ^{BBE} and “against its will.” ^{NLT}

Contrary to the purported finding of scientists, new things are not being created, but all things are in a constant state of deterioration. Nothing in the realm of nature can remain in a continuous and permanent state. That is one of the aspects of death, or mortality.

The expression “not willingly” is intended to show at least two things. **First**, the imposition of mortality upon the whole of creation was not owing to its own disobedience or obstinance. It was because of man’s sin. **Second**, there was no desire on the part of creation for mortality. It had no inclination toward this condition. Rather, it was contrary to everything about creation.

We do not do well to take this text and go about saying there is some form of intelligence in the creation like that of man. No text of Scripture ever insinuates that creation bears the image of God, which image includes both choice and reason. There is, however, some form of intuitive knowledge resident in creation that makes death repugnant to it. Just as brute creatures have intuition that enables them to swim, so there is something innate

continuous and permanent state. That is one of the aspects of death, or mortality.

This state of mortality was imposed upon the creation. It had no choice in the matter. Man’s transgression thus infected the whole of the environment that was

within the whole creation that makes it disdain death and long for freedom from it.

It is my understanding that the purpose of this text is to show the utter unreasonableness of NOT living by hope. It is also to confirm to the saints that they are part of a vast and remarkably large chorus of hope that is rising from the earth.

THE REASON BEHIND THE FUTILITY

“ . . . but because of Him who subjected it in hope.” Other versions read, *“but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope,”* ^{KJV} *“but because of Him who subjected it, in hope,”* ^{NASB} *“but by the will of the One who subjected it, in hope,”* ^{NIV} and *“but for the*

purposes of Him who imposed it.” ^{NJB}

God does nothing without a cause (Ezek 14:23). The imposition of futility upon the whole creation is no exception to that rule. The meaning of this verse is that God’s purpose was being served in the infliction of mortality upon the creation. It was not something the creation chose, as man did when he sinned. Rather, it was something God chose.

There is a remarkable truth to be seen here. While creation groans under the weight of mortality, it looks forward to the manifestation of the sons of God. **Hope, therefore, grows and flourishes in the midst of unfavorable and difficult**

circumstances!

The creation functions in strict conformity to the will of God, never rebelling or straying from its appointed purpose. Faithfully *“the sun rises and the sun sets”* (Eccl 1:5), *“which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat”* NKJV (Psa 19:5-6). It is showing an example of obedience while waiting for the revelation of the sons of God.

Nature effectively speaks to us about the role of hope, and how it enables us to survive the difficulties of life. A living hope exercises a great power upon us!

CREATION TO BE RELEASED

“²¹ Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” This verse proclaims that redemption reaches as far as the curse, praise the Lord! It registers an even greater impact that transgression. As it is written, *“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”* (Rom 5:20).

THE CREATION ITSELF

The creation, or *“the things that are made”* (Heb 12:27), was contaminated by the sin of man, and thus corruption was imposed upon it. This is seen in the Lord’s word to Adam: *“cursed is the ground for thy sake”* (Gen 3:17). Only the ground is mentioned in Genesis because of the nature of the curse of man: *“in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”* (3:17b-19).

Our text broadens the matter to include the entirety of creation. This agrees with the assessment of David, the

Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles. *“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed”* ^{DAVID} (Psa 102:25-26). *“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment”* ^{ISAIAH} (Isa 51:6). *“Heaven and*

heat?” ^{PETER} (2 Pet 3:10-12).

Corruption consists of two things. **First**, deterioration and death have been passed upon all creation. It is, in a sense, winding down. **Second**, there will be an abrupt termination to everything that is corrupt—a consumption by fire. As it is written, *“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men”* (2 Pet 3:7).

This verse proclaims that redemption reaches as far as the curse, praise the Lord! It registers an even greater impact that transgression. As it is written, “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”

earth shall pass away” ^{JESUS} (Mk 13:31). *“The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent*

“The creation itself” refers to the heavens *“with all their host,”* the earth *“and all things therein,”* and the sea *“and all that is therein”* (Neh 9:6). All of them have been infected with the curse, and all will be affected by *“the regeneration”* (Matt 19:28).

DELIVERED FROM BONDAGE

The Prophets and the Apostles refer to this deliverance as the new heavens and the new earth. Through Isaiah, God said, *“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind”* (Isa 65:17). And again, *“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me”* (Isa 65:22). Peter affirmed, *“Nevertheless we,*

according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet 3:13). From Patmos, John said “I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev 21:1). This is nothing less than deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and the whole creation is waiting and longing for it.

No More Hostilities In Creation

Because hostility and friction are aspects of death, they will all be eliminated when creation is liberated from the “bondage of corruption.” While they do not dwell upon this, the Prophets give us a hint of what will be involved. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den” (Isa 11:6-8). And again, “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD” (Isa 65:25).

Ezekiel wrote, “And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods” (Ezek 34:25).

Hosea wrote, “And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely” (Hos 2:18).

Creation Not Annihilated

We learn from this that the destruction or passing of the heavens and the earth does not mean they will be annihilated or eradicated. Rather, they will be “changed.” As it is written, “Of old

hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed” (Psa 102:25-26). They will be renovated, with all corruption burned away in the baptism of fire. They will pass away as we presently know them, and will be invested with a new appearance and manner. It will be much like our bodies, which are part of the natural order. They will be “changed” (1 Cor 15:52). As it is written, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor 15:53). Again, it is said of the body, “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:42-44). A CHANGE! That is what will

In the maintenance of spiritual life, distraction is lethal, and can even remove us from the Source of our life. We do well not to pursue an understanding of things the Spirit does not expound. After all,

occur in the creation—from corruption to incorruption, and bondage to liberty!

Care Must Be Taken

Care must be taken not to take these texts and run about wildly in a theological maze of confusion. These passages are also related to the New Covenant, in which a degree of peace is realized that was never before experienced (Isa 11:9-10; 66:12; Ezek 35:29; Hos 2:23). This by no means indicates they have no applicability to “the world to come.” It does, however, serve to neutralize carnal curiosity about the ages to come.

There is no justification for saying ones pets will be in heaven. In fact, there is a certain absurdity to the whole notion, seeing we will be with the Creator of all

things. That impersonal associations would remain dominate under such a condition is an absurdity unworthy of embracing.

The liberation of creation is nowhere associated with a resurrection. That applies to humanity alone. We should be willing to let the matter rest there.

Curious Details Are Omitted

For those with a compelling desire to pursue the nature of creation’s release from the bondage of corruption, this inspired passage will offer little satisfaction. Details about creation’s coming freedom are not approached from an academic point of view. In fact, it only has relevance because it is related to the glorification of the saints of God.

In my judgment, all of this is the deliberate work of the Holy Spirit, who is directing us in HOW to think about these things. In the maintenance of spiritual life, distraction is lethal, and can even remove us from the Source of our life. We do well not to pursue an understanding of things the Spirit does not expound. After all, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever” (Deut 29:29).

GLORIOUS LIBERTY

“...the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Creation’s deliverance from the bondage of corruption will be “**INTO**” the glorious liberty of God’s children. From bondage to liberty, and corruption to glory!

Other versions refer to this liberty as “the freedom of the glory,”^{NASB} “the glorious freedom,”^{NIV} “the liberty of the glory,”^{ASV} “the liberty of the glory.”^{YLT} This, then, is a freedom or liberty produced by glory. It is an aspect of glorification. The unspeakable freedom that will attend the total removal of mortality transcends our fondest imagination. The sentence of death was consignment to bondage! Presently, the saints have a heavenly treasure in an “earthen vessel,” or jar of clay (2 Cor 4:7). This frail vessel is responsible for weakness, ignorance, and conflict. It causes frustration, sorrow, and danger.

Because of it we must “*put on the whole armor of God*” (Eph 6:10), “*fight the good fight of faith*” (1 Tim 6:12), and “*resist the devil*” (James 4:7). All of this will be eliminated when we leave this “*vile body*” (Phil 3:21).

Liberty of Expression

However, there is an even greater liberty that will be experienced when we enter into our new body, our “*house from heaven*” (2 Cor 5:1-5). Then we will enjoy unexcelled liberty in expression and movement. No more souls will be “*under the altar*” crying out for vengeance (Rev 6:9-11). There will be no more “*spirits in prison*,” held in an interim state until the

resurrection of the dead (1 Pet 3:19). Glory will bring thorough freedom. Instantly, it will propel the redeemed above even the angelic hosts, and they will be given “*the world to come*,” to govern and manage it with Jesus (Heb 2:5-9).

At the time the sons of God are revealed and obtain the freedom that comes from being glorified, the whole creation will also be effected by that glory. That freedom cannot come until the sons of God are revealed, or appear with Christ in glory. Glory itself will bring about this freedom from corruption and decay.

Do Not Think Lightly of Sin

The liberation of the whole creation is God’s compensation for enduring the judgment of corruption because of man. Should we choose to think lightly of sin, or excuse it as though it was a small thing, the consideration of creation should cause us to cease such foolishness. The universe is winding down because of man’s sin! Blights attack plants and vegetation because of sin. Wild and uncontrollable beasts exist and prey upon one another because of the sin of man. All of this was a caused by one sin, committed in a single act of disobedience! The knowledge of this circumstance will work sobriety within the believing heart. A certain revulsion for sin will be developed.

ALL CREATION IS INVOLVED

“²² *For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*” There is an aggressiveness depicted in this verse. Creation is like an expectant mother in the throes of her final birth pains. There is nothing casual or passive about this travail.

UNIVERSAL GROANING

Everything that is made is involved: “*the whole creation.*” There is an intensity in the groans: “*labors with birth pangs.*” For six thousand years this groaning has continued without interruption or relief: “*until now.*” The groaning is found in every place on earth, and in the most distant galaxy as well. If you have an ear, you can hear the discontent of nature. It is not satisfied with its present condition. It cannot adjust, so to speak, to death, for God subjected it “*in hope.*”

HARMONIOUS BIRTH PANGS

The groaning of “*the whole creation*” is like a harmonious chorus rising into the heavens. Everything that has been made is moving toward an appointed end. For “*the whole creation,*” the end will be liberating and glorious. No aspect of creation will be excluded from the coming liberty. One ancient poem says,

That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,

And one far-off Divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.
In Memoriam

The idea is that “*the whole creation*” is moving toward a Divinely appointed time. I do not know the extent to which creation is aware of the coming liberty.

serviceable nature was to Jesus. It is as though it welcomed a beneficent Ruler, submitting to Him.

God has promised, “*Behold, I make all things new*” (Rev 21:5). In some marvelous way, the whole creation knows this, and is yearning for it to occur. The world has had one new start following the flood. As it is written of the flood, “*Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished*” (2 Pet 3:6). It was, so to speak, baptized with water, and again appeared after the floods receded without the contamination of sinful multitudes. It will yet be baptized with fire, after which it will emerge thoroughly cleansed.

I do not know the extent to which creation is aware of the coming liberty. But it is aware enough to groan, expect, and look! Every aspect of the creation joins in the chorus, groaning in harmonious expectancy.

But it is aware enough to groan, expect, and look! Every aspect of the creation joins in the chorus, groaning in harmonious expectancy. Let no child of God live beneath the privileges of the impersonal creation. Let expectation be found within the church, which has been slated to spearhead the coming glory.

Methinks creation received a foretaste of the coming liberty when the Son of God entered into its domain. He commanded blustering storms, stilled raging waves, and walked on water. How

Our text associates this liberation with the revelation of the children of God. Nature is not an end of itself. It was made for man, and not man for it. The whole creation is now travelling in birth until the sons of God are made known—until they are glorified together with Christ, as God has predestined (Rom 8:29-30). Even the creation, in some way, knows the sons of God were not made for this world. It knows they are concealed by time and circumstance, and yet fervently and consistently longs for their full exposure and glorification. It is uncomely for the sons themselves to be less aware of this.

However marvelous all of this may seem, the point being made by the Holy Spirit is not the liberation of creation, but the glorification and manifestation of the sons of God. He is showing us that we

ought not to balk at waiting and longing for the time when we will suffer no longer. We should patiently and joyfully endure the hardships of life as we wait for our coming liberty. After informing us of the

involvement of the whole creation in redemption, we now return to the saints themselves. The Spirit takes care not to leave us marveling at the creation, as though it as the center of God's purpose.

FELLOWSHIP IN GROANING

“²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” The phrase “not only that” is translated in a variety of ways in other translations. “And not only they,” ^{KJV} “and not only this,” ^{NASB} “not only so,” ^{NIV} “and not only the creation” ^{NRSV} It is as though the Spirit said, The glory to which the saints have been appointed is so marvelous that even the impersonal creation, with neither mind nor reason as we have, are eagerly anticipating it. How much more, then, will the anticipation of that glory be found in those for whom it has been prepared.

WE ALSO and WE OURSELVES

Here again, Paul confirms he is speaking for all of the people of God. Romans seven and eight are not an autobiography of Paul, but an index to the experience and hope of every person who is in Christ Jesus. By saying “we also,” he means the saints join in the travailing chorus of creation. By saying “we ourselves,” he means this is no mechanical, or even intuitive groaning. Our groaning is deeper than that of creation because we have been given to more fully see the cause, necessity, and extent of the coming glory and its attending liberty.

THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Here, the entirety of what we have received in Christ Jesus is called “the firstfruits of the Spirit.” This is a pregnant phrase that accurately depicts what we presently possess, while accentuating that the bulk of our salvation is yet to come. What we now have is to salvation what the small gleanings of Ruth were to the full harvest of the fields of Boaz. It is written that she “gleaned AFTER the reapers,” who had

gathered the bulk of the harvest (Ruth 2:3). As with us, the gleanings left for Ruth were not left to happenstance. It is written that Boaz said to the reapers, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not” (Ruth 2:15-16). So it is with the graces we enjoy in Christ Jesus. They have been deliberately left for us to gather.

Some consider that the Holy Spirit Himself is the “firstfruit” of the land. A few versions reflect this view: “having the first-fruit of the Spirit,” ^{YLT} “we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste.” ^{NLT} There is certainly a sense in which this is

By saying “we ourselves,” he means this is no mechanical, or even intuitive groaning. Our groaning is deeper than that of creation because we have been given to more fully see the cause, necessity, and extent of the coming glory and its attending liberty.

true. Thus we read of the “earnest,” or pledge, “of the Spirit” (2 Cor 1:22), who is “the earnest of our inheritance” (Eph 1:4). Yet, I do not believe that to be the meaning of the text. The “firstfruits” are given to us by the Holy Spirit, and are thus said to be “of the Spirit.”

The Scriptures affirm the active role of the Spirit in our experience of the things blessings of God.

- ❑ “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance” are declared to be “the fruit of the Spirit”—what He gives to us, or causes to develop within us (Gal 5:22-23).
- ❑ The “love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5).
- ❑ The essential attributes of the Kingdom of God, “righteous, peace and joy” are said to be “in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17).
- ❑ We also “abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:13).
- ❑ The inner strength we receive in order that Christ can dwell without our hearts by faith comes “by His Spirit” (Eph 3:16).
- ❑ Our washing, sanctification, and justification are accomplished “by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11).
- ❑ Our continued change from one stage of glory to another is accomplished “by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18).

A few drops of the coming deluge of glory have been given to us by the Holy Spirit. That heavenly sampling has whetted our appetite for the whole of our inheritance. What the Spirit gives us now is like the “one cluster of grapes” from *Eschol* to the luscious vineyards of Canaan (Num 13:23-24). It is elsewhere referred to in these words: “those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (Heb 6:4-5). All of these blessed realities are introduced to us in salvation, but we by no means have experienced the whole of them.

GROANING WITHIN OURSELVES

The “sufferings of this present time,” combined with the sampling of our

inheritance, produces deep groaning “within ourselves.” It is the groan of expectation, and it has made us discontent with “this present evil world.” We join the groaning chorus of all creation, lifting up the song of expectancy, and expressing our discontent with our present surroundings and abilities. We have freedom, but not complete freedom. We remain shackled to a body that cannot inherit the kingdom of God 1 Cor 15:50). Just as the Canaanite was in the promised land when Abraham entered it (Gen 12:6), so the remnants of our old nature remain with us while we are in the world.

Our groaning is not outward, erupting through murmuring lips. It is “within ourselves,” where the fight of faith is waged. Even as the birth pains of an expectant mother are at first known only to her, so these groans are known only to those who have them. As we will find, they involve an intense longing for liberation from this house of clay, which is coupled with a firm persuasion that our longing will be realized.

WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION

“ . . . waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” This groaning is also mentioned in the Second chapter of Second Corinthians. There it also has to do with our bodies. “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being

burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit” (5:1-5).

We have already received the “*Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father!*” (8:15). However, we have not yet been openly revealed as sons: “*it doth not yet APPEAR what we shall be*” (1 John 3:1-2). What we are within will yet be beheld from without, and it will happen when the Lord Himself appears.

We have freedom, but not complete freedom. We remain shackled to a body that cannot inherit the kingdom of God 1 Cor 15:50). Just as the Canaanite was in the promised land when Abraham entered it (Gen 12:6), so the remnants of our old nature remain with us while we are in the world.

Our redemption is not complete until we occupy our new bodies. They are houses, as compared to our present bodies that are frail tents. Our desire is not simply to get out of these bodies. That is the meaning of “*nor for that we would be unclothed.*” We yearn to inhabit our new bodies, which are adapted for glory, and through which no adversary can approach us. Our present bodies are a weight to us. They burden us because of the vileness

that is found in them, as well as their incapacity for the work of the Lord. We must “*keep under them,*” never allowing them to govern our actions. Rather, as we do to an enemy, we must bring them into “*subjection*” (1 Cor 9:27).

Notice that “*the adoption*” is related to the redemption of our body—or the change that will occur at the coming of the Lord. It is then that our present “*vile bodies*” will be changed to be like the “*glorious body*” of our Lord (Phil 3:20-21). Until then, neither adoption nor redemption is complete. If this was not the case, neither hope nor groaning would be in order.

There is a “*salvation ready to be revealed*” (1 Pet 1:5), and “*the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet 1:13). That is the time when our adoption will be fully ratified, and the fulness of the curse removed. In patience we are waiting for that day, when what we presently have embraced by faith will be received in all of its glorious fulness.

The change of our bodies is nothing less than “*the redemption of the purchased possession*” (Eph 1:14b). Our bodies have been “*bought,*” and do not belong to us (1 Cor 6:19-20). They are, in fact, “*the members of Christ,*” belonging to Him (1 Cor 6:15). Our adoption will be complete when those bodies are changed. Then Christ’s mediation, as we presently know it, will end. Struggle and disappointment will end, and there will be no more weakness or danger. There will be no more sin in our members, and nothing that can house “*the law of sin.*” How sweet to ponder this coming reality!

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF HOPE

“²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” This is the Divine explanation for why we are

patiently waiting for “*the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*” – “**FOR.**”

SAVED BY HOPE

Hope plays a vital and indispensable role in our salvation, which cannot be finalized without it. When we were born

again, it was in order “*to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (1 Pet 1:3). A “*living hope*” is a dominating one—one that is fed by the “*power of the resurrection*” of our Lord Jesus Christ (Phil 3:10). Having “*access into this grace wherein we stand,*”

faith moves us to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom 5:2): that is, rejoice in the anticipation of participating in that “glory.” Even the Scriptures were written to sustain this hope, keeping it vibrant and alive in the midst of tribulation.

Hope is one of the three dominate graces: “faith, hope, and love” (1 Cor 13:13). It is the soul’s anchor that keeps the believer’s soul from drifting from its

appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:12-13).

We cannot be saved without hope! We have not merely entered into a ship that is drifting to glory. We ourselves are involved in the process of salvation—and salvation is a process in which change and conformity to Christ’s image is taking place (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 3:29-30). The remarkable absence of a dominating hope

heaven (1 Pet 1:4). You cannot feed hope by speaking of things in this world. It will not grow and flourish with practical tips on how to live in this present evil world. Hope withers and dies in a realm that is saturated with “here and now” thinking and speaking.

If hope is to flourish, it must hear about the country faith has moved us to seek (Heb 11:14). Word of the homeland must be heard, and the “powers of the world to come” must be experienced (Heb 6:5). It is no wonder that hopelessness and despair dominate the hearts of those who never hear about heaven, their inheritance, their reign with Christ, and “the ages to come.”

Hope has to do with the future, and it empowers you for the present. Hope knows what is coming, and in view of that knowledge makes appropriate preparation. We do not hope for what we already have: “hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?” Although faith brings benefits to us here and now, it will not allow us to settle down there.

EAGERLY WAITING WITH PERSEVERANCE

Hope chooses to live now in the prospect of the future glory, when what we eagerly long for will be brought to us. It is willing to wait for the glory that is to be revealed, and to do so under great stress and trial. It can compel a sufferer like Job to shout, “If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes” (Job 14:14). And again, “And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:26-27).

eternal moorings (Heb 6:19). There is no point in the life of faith where hope is not required. As long as faith exists, hope must exist with it.

Hope “saves” us in the sense of sanctification, not of justification. Hope does not remove our sins, deliver us from the power of darkness, or translate us into the kingdom of Christ. It does not prompt the new birth, wash us, or write our names in the book of life.

Hope “saves” us in the sense of working out our own salvation “with fear and trembling” AFTER we have been born again (Phil 2:12). It moves us to “go on to perfection,” growing up into Christ in all things (Heb 6:1-3; Eph 4:15). It “saves” us by compelling us to purify ourselves, even as Jesus is pure (1 John 3:1-3). Those who are driven by hope avail themselves of the grace of God that teaches them “that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious

in much of the contemporary church is cause for alarm. Legion is the name of those who argue and dispute about various facets of the Lord’s return, yet are not hoping and longing for it! You cannot be saved by discussing the return of Christ! You must eagerly long for it, for that alone will empower you to endure all things!

THE NATURE OF HOPE

Hope has to do with the future, and it empowers you for the present. Hope knows what is coming, and in view of that knowledge makes appropriate preparation. We do not hope for what we already have: “hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?” **Although faith brings benefits to us here and now, it will not allow us to settle down there.**

Hope is an aspect of faith, having to do with things unseen. It has been convinced of the truth of the Gospel, particularly the good news of an inheritance that is reserved for us in

Where there is no dominating hope, there will be no perseverance! If men are not “eagerly waiting,” they will not be “steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58). Those who speak to us about being faithful, yet withhold food for hope, have only hindered us, they have not helped us. Hope moves men to eagerly wait and persevere because it is sure of a blessed future, and anxious for the day when they will be liberated from corruption. Then everything inhibitive will abruptly end, and no enemy will be in the land! The surety of it all is most comforting.

HELP IN OUR IGNORANCE

“²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Having established the essentiality of hope, the Spirit will now confirm the need of a Helper from heaven. Required perseverance cannot be accomplished in self-strength. However cultured and capable the individual may appear to be, he is not, in himself, equal to the rigors of living by faith. I do not believe this has registered upon the souls of average churchmen. They appear to rely too much on the flesh, and overestimate the power of nature. While men are made in the image of God, they cannot fulfill His will apart from Him. We need help, and the good news is that help has been provided!

THE DIVINE HELPER

What a humble ministry for Deity-helping men! The Psalms declare God dwells on high and *"humbles Himself to behold The things that are in the heavens and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes; with the princes of His people"* (Psa 113:6-8). Now the Spirit will declare something of what is involved in lifting the needy out of the ash heap and setting them with the princes of God's people. To speak more from a New Covenant point of view, this is how God takes men from being the enemies of God to the point where they will reign forever with Christ.

"Likewise"

"Likewise the Spirit also helps..."

Other versions read, *"And in the same way the Spirit also helps."*^{NASB} *"And as well as this, the Spirit too comes to help us."*^{NJB} The idea is this: we are aided in our journey to glory by a living hope from God. In the same way, we are also assisted by the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is like unto the ministry of hope. What He does within us blends perfectly with the function of hope. His ministry is never out of harmony with the work of preparing men for the coming of the Lord and glory.

"Helps"

The word *"helps"* is an unusually strong word. In the flesh, one might equate this word with a sort of casual involvement with those in need. But there

is nothing casual about this word. The Spirit helps us by assuming part of the burden, taking it upon Himself. He goes under the burden, and lifts us up, making us equal to the challenges of life. He *"helps"* us like the good Samaritan helped the man who fell among thieves, binding up our wounds, pouring in the oil and wine of sweet comforts, and taking care of us (Luke 10:34). He carries us to the house of comforts, where our vision is restored and our faith renewed. We could not safely negotiate to glory without the ministry of the Holy Spirit! If it were not for the marvelous help of the Holy Spirit, our groanings would get the best of us.

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OUR WEAKNESSES

The KJV reads *"infirmities."* Some versions use the word in the singular: *"weakness."*^{NASB,NIV,NRSV} This is not correct, however, for the word is in the plural. Like the high priest of old, we are *"compassed with infirmity,"* or are *"subject to weakness"*^{NKJV} (Heb 5:2). That weakness takes many forms, and thus is used in the plural form in our text. This is weakness traced back to the presence of the *"law of sin"* that is resident in our bodies. The *"old man"* has neutralized our strength. We will see this particularly touches upon our abilities of expression.

Some would lead us to believe the saved have no weaknesses, but that is just an imagination foisted upon men by the devil. Those who admit to no weakness have not told the truth, and are deceived. The conflict of Romans seven loudly announced that we have weaknesses, and cannot rid ourselves of them.

Because of his understanding of the manner of the Kingdom, and of the very present help of the Holy Spirit, Paul gloried in his infirmities. He knew the power of Christ is devoted to those who know and acknowledge their weaknesses (2 Cor 12:5-9). The redeemed have weaknesses they cannot dismiss from their persons. There is no human discipline or procedure that can rid us of these weaknesses. That is precisely why the Holy Spirit helps us in them. One key weakness is now mentioned.

HANDICAPPED!

"For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought."

The NIV reads, *"We do not know what we ought to pray for."* It is not that we do not know that we SHOULD pray, but we do not know HOW to pray, or what we should pray for. The idea is that there are resources we need—Divine supplies and graces that are required to persevere and come at last into the glory. Our infirm condition, however, has produced this circumstance: *"we do not know how to pray properly"*^{NJB} concerning these matters.

To put the subject in a proper context, those in Christ feel the weight of mortality. They have a contrary law within them, competing with the law of their mind, and lusting against the Spirit as well (Gal 5:17). They find thoughts arising in their minds that they have neither desired nor cultured, and it grieves them deeply. Yet, they are surrounded by ignorance when it comes to praying about this condition. What resources do they need? How can they ask for them? When do they need them? How can they appropriate them? A few conscious moments in the battlefield will cause this confession: *"I am not 'not able to make prayer to God in the right way.'"*^{BBE}

Let it be clear, there is no course of study that can teach men to pray properly—no catechism that will make this text obsolete. This is a statement of the truth. It is not a mere possibility, but a very real condition. It is in the framework of this situation that the Holy Spirit goes to work in our behalf. The revelation of this circumstance is not to be doubted or debated, but believed. Faith will enable us

to rely on this wonderful ministry.

THE SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION

"The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This is not something done in us, but FOR us. It is not an intercession the Spirit enables us to make, but one He accomplished FOR us. Other versions read, *"the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words,"* NASB *"the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express,"* NIV *"that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words,"* NRSV *"the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings,"* DOUAY-RHEIMS *"but the Spirit puts our desires into words which are not in our power to say,"* BBE *"But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words."* NLT and *"the Spirit personally makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words."* NJB

Prays for Us

Benefits are not always received because of our prayers. Sometimes they come to us because of the prayers, or intercessions, of the Holy Spirit. Your needs are NOT totally dependent upon your prayers, for your needs transcend your abilities of expression. Also, there are needs that cannot be expressed in human language—any language. There are

"groans" that are very real, yet cannot be explained or even articulated by men to God. These are matters that require the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Note, the Spirit does not pray through us, but FOR us. He does not enable us to pray, but prays FOR us. This does not refer to a prayer language for men, uttered through their mouths, and apart from their understanding. The language of the text does not allow for

Note, the Spirit does not pray through us, but FOR us. He does not enable us to pray, but prays FOR us. This does not refer to a prayer language for men, uttered through their mouths, and apart from their understanding.

such an interpretation, which is purely the tradition of men.

Unutterable Groanings

The prayers of reference burst forth in us *"in groanings,"* not words. The groanings themselves are the work of the Spirit. He stirs within the saints deep and unutterable desires and longings. They

are so deep the mind cannot contain them. They erupt in restlessness, discontent, and a sense of good things to come. More specifically, these are groanings of travail, or the expectation of good things to come. When attempting to explain such things, we sound like mere babblers.

These deep groanings are the expression of very real longings and needs. Yet, we cannot handle them with our understanding. They are too profound for us. Therefore, the Spirit takes these groanings and makes intercession FOR us. His intercessions exceed the capabilities of our minds. We are not capable of uttering them in speech. They must be uttered FOR us.

The Spirit Himself

Our text states the matter very carefully. In this case, it is not the spirit of man that prays. It is not an extraordinary ability that is given to the saved. They are not empowered to speak their prayers in special words. From our view, these intercessions are unutterable. It is *"the Spirit HIMSELF"* who makes them. He is devoted to our benefit, and always works to assist us in our weaknesses—even to the point of praying for us when we cannot properly pray for ourselves. Let your faith take hold of this marvelous reality. This is a very wonderful provision. But it is more than wonderful, It is essential!

EFFECTIVE INTERCESSION

"²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." The Spirit now clarifies for us that the intercessions of reference have been made by the Spirit Himself, and not by us. Further, their effectiveness is traced to the Spirit, not human expression.

At this point we will see that although we cannot understand the groanings that erupt from us, yet they are important. Even though we cannot articulate them, they are expressing very

real needs that must be answered by God. Among other things, this confirms the relative poverty of the human intellect. Here is something we need—something for which prayer must be made. Yet, we are totally incapable of lifting a prayer to God about the matter.

THE SEARCHER OF OUR HEARTS

"He who searches the hearts . . ."

This is referring to the Father Himself. It is God who *"searches the heart."* David said to his son Solomon, *"the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts"* (1 Chron 28:9). Through Jeremiah the

prophet the Lord affirmed, *"I the LORD search the heart"* (Jer 17:10). Jesus said it this way, *"your Father knoweth what things ye have need of"* (Matt 6:8).

Frequently, the fact that God searches the hearts is a solemn warning to those whose hearts are impure and defiled. In this sense He *"tries"* the hearts of men (1 Chron 29:17; Psa 7:9; 44:21; Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20). This is NOT, however, the emphasis of this text.

Here, the Lord is searching the heart for the groanings produced by the Holy Spirit—deep spiritual longings that

He desires to fulfill. This aspect of Divine searching is partially revealed in the words of Hanani the seer to king Asa: *“For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His”*^{NASB} (2 Chron 16:9). Such a heart has profound longings which cannot be articulated by those possessing them. Thus, the Lord has made provision for the gratification of such a heart.

The truth of the matter is that God is looking for a reason to bless His people! He looks deep within the heart, listening, as it were, for groanings that have been produced by His Holy Spirit. These are groanings brought about because the Spirit was not quenched or grieved. The individual has been easily led by the Spirit in the subduing of the deeds of the body, and thus profound spiritual groanings have been stimulated within. There is a strong desire to gain the blessing of the Lord that goes far beyond the believer’s ability of expression.

David, the *“the sweet psalmist of Israel”* (2 Sam 23:1), was a man ahead of his time. Many of his prayers reflected the spirit of the New Covenant. Here is one of them that unveils something of the magnitude of our text. *“Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee”* (Psa 38:9). Such a person has nothing to fear concerning the Lord’s searching of the heart.

For those who live by faith and walk in the Spirit, their heart is the repository for spiritual groanings that will be a source of blessing and benefit. The believer can only sense them, and is capable of taking them no further than that. But these groanings are not only real, they are a sort of call to God for necessary advantages. God is looking for these groanings, searching the heart to find them.

When He does, He will rely on the Holy Spirit to properly interpret them and make a petition for their fulfillment. You must believe that God is devoted to your salvation, else He would never have made such a marvelous provision!

THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT

“... knows what is the mind of the Spirit is . . .” There is perfect harmony between the Father and the Holy Spirit. Their thoughts never are in conflict, and there is perfect accord between them. That is not merely a theological position, it is a view that brings great solace to the struggling believer. It is especially relevant in this passage because the Spirit is speaking to

popular with men, but they are debilitating to the saints. The Holy Spirit is powerful, to be sure. That power, however, is channeled to the betterment of believers, giving them the advantage in the good fight of faith.

There is a certain manner in which the Spirit thinks, and a way in which He expresses Himself. His intercessions are made in strict accord with HIS mind, not that of man. While men may choose to be comfortable with clumsy expressions, God is not. If He is to give you what you need, there must be an spiritually intelligent presentation of that need. The Holy Spirit has been provided to make such intercessions. Every believer has good reason to be thankful for this.

INTERCESSION ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL

“ . . . because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

When the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us, it is in strict accord with *“the will of God.”* It is never in order for men to seek to

impose their will upon the Lord, approaching Him as though He was their servant. There is a Divine purpose that is being served in salvation as well as human need. Let it be clear that the primary purpose is NOT to meet human need, but to fulfill Divine purpose. As simplistic as that may appear, it is not commonly acknowledged.

The *“will of God”* is the driving force behind all of His workings. Jesus taught us to pray, *“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”* (Matt 6:10). When struggling with the temptation to withdraw from drinking the bitter cup God placed before Him, Jesus Himself prayed, *“Thy will be done”* (Matt 26:42). The Holy Spirit makes intercession in strict accord with that will. It is a predetermined will expressed as *“the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Eph 3:11). Both the groanings the Spirit produces and the intercessions He makes ready men for participation in that purpose.

Those who seek their own will and lack the strong inner groanings

The truth of the matter is that God is looking for a reason to bless His people! He looks deep within the heart, listening, as it were, for groanings that have been produced by His Holy Spirit. These are groanings brought about because the Spirit was not quenched or grieved.

God *“FOR us.”*

Notice the wording of this text. It is significant. The Lord searches the hearts, but knows the mind of the Spirit. It does not say the Lord searches the hearts and knows what is in man—although that is certainly true. The idea is that the Holy Spirit is within the heart of the saints—in the same place where the groaning is found. As it is written, *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father”* (Gal 4:6).

It is as though the Father immediately looks to the Spirit to intercede for us. From another perspective, the Spirit is eager to speak to the Father about the groaning He has stimulated within us. He wants our deep spiritual needs to be met, and the Father wants to meet them.

Some do not think of the Spirit as having a mind. They think of Him in a heathenistic way—as a power, an influence, or an overpowering force, like electricity. Such views of the Spirit may be

mentioned in our text are in a serious situation. I speak of those who lack spiritual appetites and longings—who have no driving compulsion to put away the flesh and all competing influences. Their condition betrays they have quenched the Spirit, and grieved Him in His holy work. Strong spiritual appetites are lacking where the things of God are not eagerly sought.

What is more, effective intercessions are not being made by the Holy Spirit for such people, for He interprets the

groanings to the Father, who is looking for their presence.

But for those who are being brought from one stage of glory to another by the Holy Spirit, their appetites are increasing. They cannot be satisfied with the husks of human theologies and the learned disquisitions of religious experts. They are driven by a single desire—to *“dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple”* (Psa 27:4). In embracing the Gospel by faith, they have

become discontent with *“this present evil world.”* They are displeased that the flesh can intrude into their thinking, and they perceive that no good dwells in it.

All such people have solid grounds to be of good cheer. God is searching the hearts of such people, looking for the marvelous workings of His Holy Spirit. The Spirit Himself is there with them, ready to offer powerful intercessions in the behalf of the believer. He will make sure what is needed will be obtained by the one who is willing to live by faith.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that suffering is the appointed prelude to glory. If we live by faith, it cannot be avoided. From one point of view, it is not pleasant or to be desired. It is genuine suffering, and there is nothing pleasant about it. However, it is the path to glory, for we are leaving a cursed realm to enter into a blessed one. We are being brought out of defiled surroundings into a realm that is pure and unmixed with any form of weakness or corruption. The suffering is produced because we live in a body that is set to resist such a journey. We also have an *“old man”* that cannot be changed, and is firmly opposed to any progress toward glory. These circumstances are the cause of much frustration within our minds and emotions. They produce most uncomfortable situations.

The glory of salvation is found in the thoroughness with which it addresses our situation. It not only removes the defilement of the past, and secures a blessed future, it also completely meets the need of the present. In a sense, we are suspended between the past and the future. In this state inner warfare and outward opposition are experienced. They soon deplete our resources and prove our earthly wisdom to be impoverished. We cannot make it to glory without help—constant and powerful help!

We cannot control our own flesh, let alone our circumstances. We have a

constantly erupting contrary law within that will not listen to reason. We shout at it to leave us alone, but it will not. We have a body that always has to be managed and controlled—that never volunteers to do the things our new heart desires. We have remarkable difficulty doing what our regenerated self desires, to say nothing of what the Lord of glory desires. Where is the enlightened soul that does not repeatedly say, *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* (Rom 7:24).

The complexities of our present circumstance extend beyond our abilities. The situation is such that we do not even know how to pray. But even that is addressed in salvation. First, we are given strong longings by the Spirit. They are deep within us, where human discernment cannot reach. There is no form of human language that can articulate these groanings. The intellect can never discover nor express them.

The marvelous salvation of God fully addresses this situation. He takes our sufferings and makes them a catalyst for even stronger desires for glory. As we embrace them by faith, the sufferings go to work for us, increasing *“the weight of*

glory” that awaits us.

To assist us in perseverance, the Lord tells us something we could not possibly know if He did not tell us. The *“whole creation”* is in the same situation as ourselves—struggling with a curse and looking for the appointed blessing. It too is suffering under the weight of mortality and bondage, yet knows that liberty and freedom are coming. It is waiting for the sons of God to be revealed. So why cannot we eagerly anticipate the same thing?

The complexities of our present circumstance extend beyond our abilities. The situation is such that we do not even know how to pray. But even that is addressed in salvation. First, we are given strong longings by the Spirit. They are deep within us, where human discernment cannot reach. There is no form of human language that can articulate these groanings. The intellect can never discover nor express them.

But we are not without hope. The very Spirit who produced the groanings of anticipation within us will decipher them to God in effective intercession. He will present them within the context of God’s appointed purpose, thereby guaranteeing our need will be met. God will see to it that we are not without needed resources.

As a loving Father, our Lord is

searching our hearts, looking for those uninterpretable groanings implanted by the Holy Spirit. He will not miss them. Their presence will rejoice His heart, for He takes delight in His children. They will even move the Spirit to take them and

intercede for us to the Father, thereby helping our infirmities. With joy, the Father will receive the Spirit's intercessions, for He knows the mind of the Spirit, which is in perfect accord with His own beneficent will.

Tell me, is there not ground for good hope? Is there any reason why we saints of God should hang our heads in despair? Let us be strong in faith like our father Abraham, thereby giving glory to God. We are saved by hope while we suffer!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 1/26/2001—meeting number 200! Continuing in our overview of the book of Romans, we will be covering verses 28-34 of the eighth chapter. The theme will be, **“GOD HAS PREDESTINATED.”** There are great profundities associated with our salvation. These confirm that saving humanity was not a simplistic objective, and the means through which it was to be accomplished were rooted in Divine purpose, and implemented by Divine wisdom and power. The verses we will cover in this lesson are some of the most profound and concise in all of Scripture. They are food for faith and water for hope. Our meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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