

EARTH'S GROANING

Staring downward from the wood
 Into faces of defiance,
 Christ drank evil for our good,
 Arms extended in compliance.

Deep beneath the jeering crowd,
 After pardoning their mocking,
 He knew silently out loud
 Earth in mournful moans was talking . . .

"Master, free us from the curse!"
 "Our Creator, don't forsake us!"
 He could feel the rocks rehearse,
 "Break the bondage now! Awake us!"

Grief was twisting out its toil
 As His holy flesh was ripping.
 Underneath, reluctant soil
 Soaked up precious crimson dripping.

Then protesting storm clouds came.
 Restless ground rebelled and trembled.
 Earthquake rumbles roared His name:
 Fear gripped souls of those assembled.

But He cried a final word,
 As His soul breathed out His spirit . . .
 "It is finished!" people heard,
 And the stones could also hear it.

Listen gently, friend or foe
 Of the God-Man, Christ the Savior.
 Feel Earth's groaning down below,
 Under humankind's behavior.

Listen, hear all Nature's plea
 For the sons of men to follow,
 To possess their liberty
 From the sins in which they wallow.

Hear Earth's moaning as it longs
 For deliverance from frustration.
 We alone must sing the songs
 That precede a freed creation.

--- David L. Hatton 9/1/94

45-08-01 –Creation Waits

creation, adoption, resurrection

Rom.8:18-25

Creation waits for the glory at the end of the Gospel story.

INTRODUCTION:

---Is nature dead or a live, or just sick? (ENTROPY) & (NARNIA: the lamp post rod that grew into another lamp post.)

--Biblical glimpses of another viewpoint:

Ge 4:10, The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."

Le 18:28, And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

Nu 22:27-30, (the story of Balaam's donkey whose mouth the Lord opened)

Lu 19:40, "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

–**Title** is about the hope of Nature & the nature of our Hope.

--The restoration of creation is tied to our own hope of glory

--**HOM.idea**, because . . .

I. Creation's past is tied to our past, v.20

A. Nature subjected to vanity for man's sake,

1. Ge 3:17-19, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
2. "frustration" = the vanity, emptiness, meaninglessness described in Ecclesiastes.

B. God's "subjection" (a military term for ordering troops) was a battle tactic: Nature + vanity = "This is not home!"

TRANS: Creation was subjected to an endless cycle of frustration, but not without hope, a hope that would only be fulfilled when a redeemed humanity had come home. **Creation waits for the glory at the end of the Gospel story**, because . . .

II. Creation's present groaning echoes our own, v.19, 22-23

- A. Two aspects of nature's waiting: "Waits" (only used in relationship to Christ's Second Coming) "with outstretched neck looking in a direction," (Phillips, "on tiptoe").

1. "Groaning"--nature sings, but in a minor key (OLD CHRISTMAS TREES)
 2. "Labor pains" of childbirth (MATERNAL MOANING, symptoms of life not death)
- B. Humanity's longing for eternity— Eccl. 3:11, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they can not fathom what God has done from beginning to end."
1. The first-fruits of the Spirit mean more to come— 2 Co 1:22, "(He) set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."
 2. The longing to be clothed with immortality (body, soul, spirit), **read 2 Cor.5:1-10**
- C. Children by birth, sons by adoption, (explained in Gal. 4:1-5)
1. Becoming God's children by new birth-- John 1:12, "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."
 2. Completing sonship by resurrection, like Christ— Rom.1:4, "and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord"

TRANS: Creation is caught in a losing battle with death and decay, and so are we. Creation continues to wait and groan, waiting for the glory at the end of the Gospel story. **Creation waits for the glory at the end of the Gospel story**, because . . .

III. Creation's future freedom is tied to our hope alone, v.21

- A. Does nature know its future?
1. (ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE ANIMALS): what did he preach?— Isa 11:6-9--"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD" — Ps 96:11-13, "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth." -- Ps 98:7-9, "Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the LORD, for he

- comes to judge the earth."
2. Nature did hear its Master: (JESUS SPEAKING TO THE RAGING SEA)
- B. The glory of the freedom of God's children
1. A glory we lost through sin (Rom.3:23), and through us, creation lost it.
 2. Ours and creation's liberation from the curse of sin and death came by the cross of Jesus, Col 1:18-20--"And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."
- C. Did you know we have an incomplete salvation?! **v.24-25,18**
1. We are saved or born again "into" an expectation, an anticipation.
 2. Hope says, "The shows not over!"— Patience says, "Hold on to your seats!"
 3. Key to hope's patient endurance: the glory at the end of the story is beyond description:
 - a. (SCALES) the weights on the balances are incomparable-- 2 Cor.4:17-18, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."
 - b. (STRING ACROSS THE PULPIT) the comparison is astronomically inconceivable— 1 Cor.2:9, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

CONCLUSION:

- Some don't understand Christianity, because while we say we have "life," we die.
- But the story is not over! Creation itself knows that fact, and it's waiting on humanity to respond to the King who came and who is coming again!
- (read EARTH'S GROANING) Creation is waiting for the glory that begins with our response to the Gospel story. That is the same glory every human heart truly longs for, the glory that every Christian joins creation in waiting for at Christ's Return.