

45-08-01-Creation Waits

creation, adoption, resurrection, Eastertide

Rom 8:18-25

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

INTRODUCTION: (text read as the Scripture Reading)

–The Resurrection isn’t just “Good News” for *us*, but for *all creation*, which Paul says, in **Col 1:23**, already knows about it– “the **hope of the gospel** that you heard, which **has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven.**” The Resurrection of Jesus promises hope for the entire universe. Death and decay is the present state of things, but not the permanent one.

–**Scientists say** that nature is just *inert matter* in a series of chemical reactions. They know the universe is decaying: everything is winding down. But *Who wound it up?* God says that He did, and that *death and decay are foreigners that invaded creation through human sin*.

–So, is nature *still alive*, did it *really die*, or is it *just sick*? The Bible offers glimpses that tell us that nature is still very much alive:

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

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

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

Luke 19:40, “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

–**Title from text:** our hope in the Resurrection is also the hope of the material & spiritual universe in a “new heaven and new earth.” **HOM.idea.**

The restoration of creation is tied to our own hope of glory, because...

I. Present Creation Is Tied to Humanity’s Past– v.20, *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope...*

A. Creation was subjected to frustration [futility, disintegration, decay, entropy] for our sake– **Gen 3:17-18**, “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.”

B. God did the subjecting [**military term** for ordering troops]. *Why?* It was a battle tactic: Nature + decay = “*This is not home!*” (If this world remained a paradise, we might be happy to live on here in sin.)

TRANS: Creation used to be more alive. [**Narnia**’s lamp post rod that grew

into a new lamp post./ **My dream** of stepping across into an *alive* creation.] **God subjected creation to a cycle of frustration, but not without hope, a hope that remains unfulfilled until humanity finally comes 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, The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.... We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

A. Creation’s “waiting” [**a term** used only in relation to Christ’s 2nd Coming; it means: “with outstretched neck looking in a direction”— **Phillips translation** says, “on tiptoe.”] is described by:

1. *groaning* (Nature still sings in a major way, but in a minor key.)
2. *pains of childbirth* [**maternal moaning** is symptomatic of *new life not death.*]

B. Humanity longs for survival, for immortality

1. *first-fruits of the Spirit* means “*More to come!*”— **2 Cor 1:22b**, ...(God) put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.
2. *What’s coming?*– **2 Cor 5:4**, For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

C. This passage describes us both as children and as sons:

1. We entered *the glorious freedom of the children of God by new birth.*
2. But our *adoption as sons* awaits *the redemption of our bodies, that bodily resurrection* which is like that of Christ– **Rom1:4**, “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 in a losing battle with death and decay, and so are we. We are both **waiting for the glory at the end of the Gospel story.**

III. We Both Await Freedom– v.21, *creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

A. Does nature know its future? Does it listen better than we do?

1. What did St. Francis preach to the animals? **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. / **Psa 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.

2. Did nature know it was hearing its Master's voice when Jesus told the raging sea "Peace, be still," and it obeyed?

B. What is this glorious freedom of the children of God?

1. It's the freedom of God's glory, which humanity lost through sin, and which creation lost, too, through us!

2. It's Christ's reconciliation of the universe that began with us—Col 1:19-20. 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. Salvation is incomplete; there's (v.18b) glory that will be revealed in us.

1. We are saved in an expectation— v.24a. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?

2. Hope and patience go together— v.25. But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Hope proclaims, "The shows not over!" And patience exhorts, "Hold on to your seats!")

CONCLUSION:

—Christians die, like everyone else, but creation knows that the story's not over! Creation is waiting on humanity to respond to the King!

— read "EARTH'S GROANING"

Staring downward from the wood	Then protesting storm clouds came.
Into faces of defiance,	Restless ground rebelled and trembled.
Christ drank evil for our good,	Earthquake rumbles roared His name:
Arms extended in compliance. //	Fear gripped souls of those assembled. //
Deep beneath the jeering crowd,	But He cried a final word,
After pardoning their mocking,	As His soul breathed out His spirit . . .
He knew silently out loud	"It is finished!" people heard,
Earth in mournful moans was talking... //	And the stones could also hear it. //
"Master, free us from the curse!"	Listen gently, friend or foe
"Our Creator, don't forsake us!"	Of the God-Man, Christ the Savior.
He could feel the rocks rehearse,	Feel Earth's groaning down below,
"Break the bondage now! Awake us!" //	Under humankind's behavior. //
Grief was twisting out its toil	Listen, hear all Nature's plea
As His holy flesh was ripping.	For the sons of men to follow,
Underneath, reluctant soil	To possess their liberty
Soaked up precious crimson dripping. //	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. (DLH, 9/1/94)

Creation is waiting for the glory that comes from our response to the Gospel story. It's a glory that every human heart truly longs for, a glory that creation and every Christian is waiting for at Christ's Return.

Romans 8:18-25 (NIV)

18I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

19The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

20For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

21that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

22We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

23Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

24For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?

25But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.