

# This Present Suffering and Future Glory

By Abri Brancken, 16 Jul 2019

Romans 8:18-27

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation (groaning) for the children of God to be revealed. 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 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In Romans 8 we see that we have a new position in Christ and that the work of the Holy Spirit is critical in our lives.

We see that:

V2-3 He is freeing us from sin and death

V4 He is enabling us to fulfill the law

V5-11 changing our nature

V12-13 He is empowering us for righteousness

14-16 He is confirming our adoptions as sons of God

V18 and on He is guaranteeing and securing our future eternal glory

The Holy Spirit sanctify us and He is securing us for our eternal future. He seals us for our eternal future with the Father. Paul addresses this point as well in his letter to the Ephesians.

### **Ephesians 1:13-14**

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

So, the Holy Spirit saves us, then He helps us in our walk with God in holiness and then secure us for an eternal glorious future with Christ.

We are moving from grace to glory. This is good news. While we await the future glory, the Holy Spirit helps us through the process, we are not alone. But, that means that everything is not perfect at this moment. The present time is marked by sufferings because of man's fall into sin.

Paul mentions "the sufferings of this present time" (8:18). He was not referring to an especially difficult period in history, but to the entire present age. The whole history of creation since the fall is marked by suffering. The history of nations is marked by struggles and catastrophes—wars, natural disasters, internal conflicts, power struggles, and crimes. The history of individuals is also in large part a history of trials—the trials of growing up, figuring out what to do with your life, whom you will marry, rearing children, working through struggles in your marriage, providing for your needs, growing old and facing declining health and death. Everyone wants to get out of this state we are in, both people but also creation itself. Therefore, we are in eager expectation, in groaning for the better life to come.

## THE GROANINGS

V19 Creation is groaning  
V23 we ourselves groan  
v26 the Holy Spirit groans

Everyone and everything feels the unfulfillment that the fullness of God's glory has not yet come.

**Groaning means:** "An intense and persistent expectation", "with outstretched head".

As Christians, we are waiting for our future glory; the full development of the honors that await us as the children of God; Rom 8:19.

We are subjected to a state of trial and vanity, challenges and obstacles until we receive our full inheritance. It's a time of suspension between who we are children of God and what we will fully become in His presence. This condition of things does not exist merely in regard to the Christian, but is the common condition of the world. It all groans, and is in trial, as much as the Christian. We are all in the same boat, the believers with creation.

The final rescue and the taking possession in full of our final inheritance is coming and that is what we are looking forward to. The time is coming when the effects of sin on this world will be removed and a new heaven and new earth will appear.

## CREATION IS GROANING

Creation cannot be what it wants to be because of the tremendous effect of sin, wickedness. At a point in history in the past creation went from purposeful to purposeless. When everything fell. Creation is not at fault, it was subjected and therefore not creation's fault. Creation is an involuntary victim. God subjected creation (Gen 3:17-19) to this state. When?

### Genesis 3:17-19

Gen 3:17 He told the man, "Because you have listened to what your wife said, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' cursed is the ground because of you. You'll eat from it through pain-filled labor for the rest of your life.

Gen 3:18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you'll eat the plants from the meadows.

Gen 3:19 You will eat food by the sweat of your brow until you're buried in the ground, because you were taken from it. You're made from dust and you'll return to dust."

The fall was so destructive that it affected everything. Decay, degeneration, destruction is a result of the fall.

### **Isaiah 24:4-6**

Isa 24:4 "The earth dries up and withers; the world languishes and fades away; heaven fades away, along with the earth.

Isa 24:5 The earth lies defiled beneath its inhabitants; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant.

Isa 24:6 Therefore the curse keeps on consuming, and its inhabitants are declared guilty.

### **Jeremiah 12:4**

Jer 12:4 How long will the land mourn and the vegetation of every field dry up? Because of the wickedness of those who live in it, animals and birds are swept away.

Creation is on the way down from perfection to destruction. Environmental programs will not change this because the environment is cursed.

### **2 Peter 3:10-13**

2Pe 3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will disappear with a roaring sound, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be exposed.

2Pe 3:11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, think of the kind of holy and godly people you ought to be

2Pe 3:12 as you look forward to and hasten the coming of the day of God, when the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved and the elements will melt with fire.

2Pe 3:13 But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Revelation 20, 21, 22 also speaks about this.

The creation went down with the fall of man and will be restored with the exaltation of the sons of God.

Nature's destiny is linked with man's condition. When the children of God are glorified then creation will reap the benefit thereof. The glorification of the sons of God will be marvelous. Jesus said we will be shining like the sun.

### **Mat 13:43**

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom.

The way to change the deterioration is humanity submitting to God's redemptive plan from this corruption.

### **Rom 8:22-24**

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

## **WE ARE GROANING**

V23 we ourselves groan

There is a problem of pain and suffering. Being a Christian does not imply no suffering or challenges. We groan for the adoptions as sons. We wait for the redemption of our bodies. We have not received our full inheritance yet. Our glorified bodies still await us and where we share in the fullness of God's presence.

Paul (in his epistles) often mentions the trials that he endured, which would have driven most of us to despair (see 2 Cor. 11:23-28).

### **2 Cor 11:23-28**

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, [d]through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and [e]exposure. 28 Apart from such [f]external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

We all face challenges, but it is nothing compared to the glory which is coming. Our present sufferings are relatively short compared to our eternal sharing in the glory of God. Also, the weight of our present trials is like a feather on the scale, which can't compare with the tons of gold of the glory that will be revealed to and in us. Paul expresses the same thought in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Jesus followed the same pattern. He endured the suffering in this life because He knew how much glory was coming.

### **Hebrews 12:2**

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him (Jesus) he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What keeps our hope bright? It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in us. We wait for the return of Christ and for our own future glory. We have a new hope, the full and final redemption not only of ourselves but all things.

### **Revelation 21:3-5**

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away." And the One seated on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

### **Life Group gatherings question to consider:**

1. Do you acknowledge the Holy Spirit's work in your life in keeping your hope alive for a future glory?
2. What can you do to keep your hope alive?
3. Think and talk about the "groanings" that you are experiencing in this life. Do you feel the tension between this life and the age to come?