

The Christian's Lamentation Part 1

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 8:19-21

Preached on: Sunday, January 8, 2012

Romans chapter eight. We will be looking this morning at verses 19 through 25 as we continue our verse by verse study through Paul's epistle to the Romans.

Let me read this text to you. And actually we will get a running start by beginning at verse 18. Romans chapter eight verse 18.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.¹

Every year it seems that we are bombarded by various politicians who are trying to convince us to vote for them and, certainly, this is an election year so we hear much of that today. They all have their own version of hope and change. Follow my ideas, my leadership and you will have a better life. And like sheep led to the slaughter, millions of people buy in to whatever they are selling, place their faith in them. But then little by little they begin to realize that things really don't change all that much. In fact, in many ways things tend to get worse rather than better.

Well, Satan also offers a religious version of hope and change in the religious charlatans that dominate television and radio and the print media with their own version of hope and change. Believe in my version of the gospel. Believe in my God and you will experience heaven on earth. And, once again, like sheep led to the slaughter, people place their faith in these charlatans and the false God that they have created and eventually they, too, realize that in the end nothing substantial in their life changes. In fact, in many ways it gets worse.

And then, of course, there is the sophisticated academics, the intellectual elite in our colleges and universities, the ones that make up our think tanks. And they have their own version of hope and change. Without fail they are deceived by evolutionary theory that basically says that everything is advancing and developing upward and any kind of

¹ Romans 8:18-25.

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degradation, any kind of deterioration that we have in the world is basically man's fault. And so, therefore we must change man who, by the way, is inherently good. The reason good people do bad things is because bad things happen to good people. Man is not depraved. He is deprived. And so they answer things like social justice, redistribution of wealth, build better self esteem because people tend to feel badly about themselves. We need better education, free healthcare, affordable housing. We need to legislate tolerance to make sure that every lifestyle and every religion except biblical Christianity is accepted.

And if we do all of these things, ultimately the world is going to become a better place. Well, of course, all of this requires government control and only the elite intellectuals really have the answers. So they need to be a part of the government to somehow produce Utopia. And this is not just what happens in the United States. This is happening all around the world and it has for millennia.

Yet despite all of this, nothing really ever changes.

I am reminded of what Job said in Job five verse seven.

“For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.”²

We are born in trauma. We live in conflict throughout our lives and then we return, once again, to earth.

My, pastor, thank you for the words of encouragement.

But in truth we all struggle to survive, don't we? We are faced on a continual basis with deadly viruses and bacteria. I was reading the other day that because of the mosquito that carries malaria, there are over one million people every year that die of that disease. There is devastating storms and earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, famine, disease, endless goodbyes. There is human tragedies, tragedies of divorce and broken families, abused children, pedophiles, rapists, thieves, violence, wars, terrorists. On and on it goes.

Yet despite man's best efforts nothing ever really changes for the better. This is life.

But the question is: Has it always been this way and is there any real hope that one day it will change?

Well, the short answer is: No, it hasn't always been this way. Once upon a time the world was a perfect paradise where man would never die. And, yes, God has promised a return to that paradise, a time that will exist for 1000 years and then ultimately complete human history and usher in the eternal state of glory. This has been the confident hope of the

² Job 5:7.

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redeemed down through history. And, of course, this is a world view based upon divine revelation. This is what God tells us in his Word.

Now, mind you, this is utter foolishness to the unsaved. His hope is only in himself, not in his creator God. And unless he repents, the only change he will ever experience will be from bad to worse, unimaginably worse.

So we come here to our text in Romans eight verses 19 through 25 where we learn how and why things got the way they are, why they got this bad. We learn how and why things will get so much better for those who have been justified by grace through faith in Christ. And here we have God's explanation of what I would call the Christian's lamentation, why we grieve, why we struggle in this life even as believers. And also the certain hope that we have that one day it will radically change. It will change into an existence that is inconceivably wonderful.

And the apostle sets forth here in this text two very stunning doctrines. Number one, we are going to see the creation's slavery to corruption. We are going to look at that today in verses 19 through 22. And then the next time we are together we are going to look at the second doctrine and that is the Christian's perseverance in hope.

Now these are magnificent truths, dear friends, that should stir our affections to praise the one who has saved us by his grace. And so I would just pray that the Spirit will now lead us into all truth as we examine these things.

Now bear in mind that the apostle Paul has encouraged us in verse 18 as to how to be triumphant sufferers. He says:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”³

So obviously here we see that the glory that awaits us has been replaced somehow with the reality of existence in this present age that brings about suffering. So the question is why. And the apostle now is going to explain this under the heading of the creation's slavery to corruption.

Paul begins here by personifying nature as being in distress and he is earnestly expecting or he is expressing how that creation is earnestly expecting a particular event that is going to radically change the current state.

Notice verse 19. He says:

³ Romans 8:18.

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“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.”⁴

Now, first of all, we must ask the question: What is he referring to with the word “creation”? This can't refer to the holy angels because they have not been subjected to futility as we see in verse 20 or succumb to any kind of corruption as he speaks about in verse 21. Moreover, this cannot refer to the fallen angels, because when this day comes it will be a day of final judgment for them. So they are certainly not looking forward to this. It can't be referring to sinful man, because sinful man doesn't even believe any of this. He thinks it is foolish. It is not even referring to the Christian, because Paul refers to the believer in a separate and contrasting category in verse 23. So all that is left is God's animate and irrational inanimate creation, the animals, the plants, the mountains, rivers, plains, the seas, the heavenly bodies. These are all personified as anxiously longing. The term in the original language speaks of a yearning desire. In fact, the imagery of the term in the original is that of watching eagerly with an outstretched head. It is the idea of standing in tippy toes, as we would say, looking for something to happen.

It reminds me of the scenes that we see often on the news when military wives and their children are straining their neck to see their husband and father step down off the plane. That is the idea.

Notice it says that it waits eagerly. And this further adds to the idea here that it is waiting with great anticipation, but with a confident patience. What is it waiting for? It says the revealing of the sons of God, the revealing, the ἀποκαλυψις (ap-ok-al'-oop-sis), the uncovering, the unveiling, the disclosing, the revelation of something. And here it is speaking of the full disclosure of that glorious time when the curse will be removed and the Lord Jesus Christ returns in all of his glory and he renovates the earth in the messianic age and returns it once again to edenic splendor. This will be the time, according to Colossians three verses three and four, this revealing of the sons of God, he says:

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.⁵

Now we will look at that some more in a few minutes, but first we want to ask the question. Well, what happened to God's perfect creation that has resulted in this universal calamity here? Well, he explains it in verse 20. He says:

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it.”⁶

⁴ Romans 8:19.

⁵ Colossians 3:3-4.

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Now we must remember that originally when God created everything, it was perfect. Genesis 1:31 we read:

“And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”⁷

Adam and Eve were perfect physically, perfect spiritually. They were capable of living forever in a perfect environment. In fact, as we study Scripture and understand this, we realize that this is a time when there was no uninhabitable places upon the earth. There would have been no hurricanes, no tornadoes, no natural disasters, no polar ice fields, no harmful bacteria or viruses or deadly disease, earthquakes, certainly no fallen human nature. But we read about what happened because of sin in Genesis 3:16-19 where God cursed Adam and Eve and all of mankind and all of his creation because of their sin.

In that text we read:

To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”⁸

So this helps us understand what the apostle is saying here in verse 20.

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it.”⁹

What is futility? Well, the term in the original language has the idea of that which is aimless, that which is useless, the inability to reach a goal or to fulfill a purpose. But what was that purpose? Why did God create what he created? The answer is to bring glory unto himself. And so because of sin, the Creator cursed his creation, including mankind, and all his animate as well as non rational inanimate creation. And therefore no longer would all of this exist as it was originally intended to function.

⁶ Romans 8:20.

⁷ Genesis 1:31.

⁸ Genesis 3:16-19.

⁹ Romans 8:20.

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We see this reflected in the laws of physics, especially the law of entropy, the second law of thermodynamics. And that law states that matter and energy in the universe are in a constant state of entropy, an irreversible process of continual degradation and deterioration.

By the way, that is a law that utterly refutes the theory of evolution that requires just the opposite which I find fascinating. To put it simply, if I take my pick up truck, set it out in a field and come back 10,000 years later, it will not be an F-18 super hornet fighter.

So the creator cursed his creation. Yet isn't it amazing? Even with the curse we still witness the glory and the majesty of God. But nothing like it was originally intended. Today we see his curse manifested in a very violent earth. In fact, much of the earth today is uninhabitable due to extreme cold, due to enormous bodies of water. The earth is subjected to pestilence, to weeds, to drought, floods, erosion. Again, tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, things that we call... always tend to call natural disasters. But all of these things are ultimately, dear friends, a result of God's curse.

Think of them as a perpetual reminder of the offended holiness of the creator God. This world is not a safe place, not a safe place to live. It is not a home for which we were ultimately suited.

I hear people from time to time naively saying, "Oh, we just want to get back to nature."

Friends, I have spent much of my life in the wilderness and let me tell you. It is a hostile place. You will die unless you do something to fight against all of the difficulties that are associated with this fallen world.

We were originally created for something radically different than what we experience, for a realm in which we had a right relationship with God, a right relationship with fellow man, a right relationship with the world in which we live. But notice in verse 20 at the end. He said he:

"...subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God."¹⁰

You see, some day, all of the disease, all of the decay, all of the human suffering, death, natural disasters brought on by the curse is going to cease. It is going to cease to exist. We are going to see a sample of this when the curse is lifted at the second coming of Christ when he establishes his millennial kingdom and then that will ultimately usher in a new heavens and a new earth in the eternal state.

¹⁰ Romans 8:20-21.

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So eventually the curse is going to be reversed. But now creation remains, according to verse seven, in slavery to corruption, that inevitable process of deterioration and degradation. It cannot bring glory to the creator as it was originally intended.

Well, how long is this going to happen? Is this just going to be the way it is forever? No. It says until the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Again, another way of describing the time when Christ returns and liberates his creation from the bondage of sin. This is the hope that we have.

But until that glorious day, notice verse 22. He says:

“For we know that the whole creation groans.”¹¹

In the original language that term means to make a deep, inarticulate sound conveying pain and despair. All creation groans and it says:

“...and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”¹²

It is as though all of creation is groaning in pain like a mother that is travailing in the agonies of childbirth. The idea here, dear friends, is creation travails in the pain of labor as it prepares to give birth to a new life, anticipating a glorious arrival of a new creation that will glorify God in all of its fullness.

So we learn here that God's curse upon his creation was not the result of something that creation did, but because of what man did. Therefore—and I want you to understand this—the restoration of creation is inseparably linked to man's restoration. He says that the glory that is to be revealed to us that Paul spoke about in verse 18, that which we anticipate.

So it is for this reason that creation is pictured, again, as standing on its tiptoes with great anticipation for this revealing of the sons of God. The prospect here is just absolutely exhilarating, isn't it? It is just almost beyond our ability to even speak of, much less to imagine.

In fact, he says in verse 23 that:

“...we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”¹³

A topic that we will examine the next time we are together.

¹¹ Romans 8:22.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

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But first I wish to look more closely at this stunning statement in verse 19.

“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.”¹⁴

This must speak of something incredibly marvelous. So what does this mean? What is this revealing of the sons of God? Let's examine this more closely. Bear in mind as we look through Scripture we see that because we are hidden in Christ, we will one day be fully conformed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will be like him.

Philippians chapter three at the end of verse 20 he says:

“...we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”¹⁵

Now, of course, we saw a glimpse of the glory of the Christ on the mount of transfiguration. Remember there in Matthew 17 we read in verse two that his face shone like the sun and his garments became white as white? Magnificent scene. And for this reason Peter would later write in 2 Peter 1:16 that we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Now, beloved, this will be the same kind of majesty that will adorn us when we are glorified with him. This is what we will share because we are the adopted children of God. Remember what Paul said here in verse 17 of Romans eight.

“...and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”¹⁶

Daniel described this revealing of the sons of God in Daniel 12:3 where he spoke about us as being the brightness of the expanse of heaven and as being like the stars forever and ever.

And John describes us in 1 John three and verse two. He said:

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Romans 8:19.

¹⁵ Philippians 3:20-21.

¹⁶ Romans 8:17.

¹⁷ 1 John 3:2.

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An astounding thought.

2 Thessalonians 1:10.

Paul speaks of that day, quote:

“...when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed.”¹⁸

And according to Revelation 19, especially in verse 11 we read that when he returns he will come in righteousness to judge and to make war. He will come as both the judge as well as the executioner of those who will have repeatedly and deliberately spurned all of the warnings and ignored all of the invitations to repent that will have dominated the seven year of tribulation before his return. What an astonishing day this will be when the King of kings and the Lord of lords returns in all of his glory.

And according to verse 14 we read that we will follow him. This is in Revelation 19.

“And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.”¹⁹

A text that speaks of the saints as we see in other passages as well.

So, my friends, this is the day that creation waits for in such earnest, the revealing of the sons of God.

Now, to be sure, it is very difficult to distinguish who is truly part of the kingdom and who is not. Who is really a son of God and who is not. In fact, we live in a culture where even many believers go to extreme lengths to look and act like the most ungodly and immoral people in our society. The idea is that we somehow must become like them in order to win them.

And many times we can even see that non believers have more integrity and more morality than some believers. So it is hard to make the distinction. And then there is the tragedy of the tares amongst the wheat, the tragedy that Jesus spoke of in Matthew seven where he warned that most who call him Lord are self deceived and will never enter the kingdom.

So it is hard to distinguish the true sons of God. In fact, in 1 John three verse one John says:

¹⁸ 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

¹⁹ Revelation 19:14.

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“... the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”²⁰

But one day, my friends, one day the true sons of God, the few who entered into the kingdom through the narrow gate of genuine repentance will be revealed. They will be put on display for the world to see.

Now, what does Scripture tell us about what else is actually going to happen at this time when Christ returns and when we are revealed with him?

I would like to give you just a brief prophetic overview of a few passages of Scripture that I think would be helpful. May I remind you that I believe as we look at Scripture that the next event on the prophetic time table is the snatching away of the Church, many times called the rapture of the Church when, according to 1 Thessalonians at the end of verse 16:

“... the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”²¹

And after he has translated his Church into heaven, he will set into motion the final pre kingdom judgments, sometimes known as Daniel's 70th week. And this will culminate in the physical return of the Lord Jesus Christ where he will begin to finalize his plan to bring glory to himself which will include the revealing of the sons of God. It will include things like judgment upon the wicked that are left upon the earth. It will include the temporarily binding Satan and his minions for 1000 years and so forth. This will be a day when God will fulfill his covenant promises to his chosen nation of Israel. They are currently his beloved enemy. They have been judicially hardened in their heart because of their unbelief, according to Romans 11 verse 25. And in verse 26 we learn that one day all Israel will be saved. This will be the time when that happens.

In fact, as we look at prophecy we see that in the hour of Israel's greatest peril, the Messiah King, the Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven and he will return and defend the remnant of his people whom he will reconcile unto himself in saving faith. And right now we see the nations of the world allied against the little tiny country of Israel waiting for a time to destroy them.

We see today one of the most virulent strains of anti-Semitism. And all of this is a preparation for the things that must come to pass. When the Lord returns he will bring deliverance to Jerusalem and judgment upon the nations. As we look at Scripture we learn that he will descend upon the Mount of Olives in unimaginable triumph and a great earthquake will split Jerusalem. It will create a massive valley leading from the temple

²⁰ 1 John 3:1.

²¹ 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

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mount to the desert. Excuse me. This will be a valley through which the Jews will flee to safety at that time.

It will be at that time that Christ will establish his long promised Messianic kingdom that will last for 1000 years as we read in Revelation 20. And, again, a time when the earth will be renovated. The curse upon the earth will be reversed and it will be returned once again to the pristine beauty of the Garden of Eden.

In Acts chapter three verse 19 Peter called this time as the times of refreshing that will come from the presence of the Lord. And in verse 21 he described it as, quote:

“... the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”²²

Now let me give you just a few samples of what this will look like upon the earth. And, again, this is just a brief sampling. But we know, for example, Scriptures teach that the waste places will become fruitful. Most of the earth's surface today is not suitable for cultivation. And more arable land is disappearing at an alarming rate. But in the kingdom there is a promise of abundant rainfall in Joel two that will come at proper times. According to Ezekiel 30 verse 26 we read that God will cause the showers to come down in his season.

We also know that there will be streams during this time that will... streams of water that will come from new and unlikely places. It is kind of hard for us to imagine that because we have so much water here. But most of the world does not have enough water.

In Isaiah 30 verse 25 we read:

“And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters.”²³

And then in chapter 35 and verses six and seven:

“...in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.”²⁴

And in Isaiah 41 verse 18 he says:

““I will open rivers on the bare heights, And springs in the midst of the valleys.”²⁵

²² Acts 3:21.

²³ Isaiah 30:25.

²⁴ Isaiah 35:6-7.

²⁵ Isaiah 41:18.

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As we look at the prophetic literature we see that even the ugly places on earth caused by human evil like places like slums and toxic dumps and so forth, will be reclaimed. They will be restored.

In Isaiah chapter 61 verse four we read:

“Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations, And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.”²⁶

In fact, Solomon even spoke of the messianic age in Psalm 72 verse 16, for example. He says that there would be an abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains. Its fruit will wave like the cedars of Lebanon. He says:

“And may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth.”²⁷

Prophecy tells us that this will also be a time of increased fertility and productiveness. The wilderness will become, quote, “a fruitful field,” in Isaiah 32:13-15.

And in Isaiah 35 verses one and two we read:

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly.”²⁸

This will be a time, my friends, when famines will no longer exist, according to Ezekiel 34:29. And in Ezekiel 36:4-11 we read that the mountains and the hills and the valleys shall be all restored to productiveness.

I love what we read in Amos chapter nine verse 13 where the Lord describes this increase saying:

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will drip sweet wine, And all the hills will be dissolved.”²⁹

There will also be changes in the animal world. We see this in Hosea chapter two verse 18.

²⁶ Isaiah 61:4.

²⁷ Psalm 72:16.

²⁸ Isaiah 35:1-2.

²⁹ Amos 9:13.

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“In that day I will also make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, The birds of the sky, And the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, And will make them lie down in safety.”³⁰

Ezekiel prophesies of this same type of thing in chapter 34 verse 25 we read:

“...and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.”³¹

If you know anything about animals, that is not the way it is now. God pronounced the terror of man upon them when they exited the ark and that is the way it has been to this day.

And you are familiar with the great text in Isaiah chapter 11 beginning at verse six.

“And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the kid, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them.”³²

In fact, animals will even revert back to the way they ate during the days of Eden. They will become herbivores. In verse seven there we read that the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

During the millennial age there will be the disappearance of physical disease and deformity. All physical infirmity and deformity will be remedied.

Isaiah 35 verse five.

“Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.”³³

In fact, as we studied the prophecies pertaining to the millennial age, we see that disease will be somehow controlled supernaturally, perhaps through both prevention and cure or through the things that God has created. In Isaiah chapter 33 verse 24 we read:

“And no resident will say, ‘I am sick.’”³⁴

And in Ezekiel 47 verse 12:

“... and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.”³⁵

³⁰ Hosea 2:18.

³¹ Ezekiel 34:25.

³² Isaiah 11:6.

³³ Isaiah 35:5-6.

³⁴ Isaiah 33:24.

³⁵ Ezekiel 47:12.

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Long life will become the rule during the millennial age. Isaiah 65 verse 22:

“...for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”³⁶

So, my friends, when Satan is bound here for 1000 years unthreatened holiness will characterize the messianic age. It will be a period, also, when the nation of Israel is restored back to the land that God promised Abraham. It will be a time when finally Israel will enjoy a theocratic kingdom with the Messiah King reigning over them as promised to David in 2 Samuel seven. And one of the most incredible things is that we will reign with him.

1 Corinthians 6:2 Paul says:

“Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?”³⁷

2 Timothy 2:12:

“...we shall also reign with Him.”³⁸

Revelation 2:26 we are told that we will be given, quote:

“...AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS.”³⁹

And in chapter five verses 10:

“Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”⁴⁰

Revelation 20 verse six we read that we will be, quote:

“...priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”⁴¹

Amazing, isn't it?

Moreover, this will be a time of the restoration of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jesus also promised that his apostles would reign with him. In Matthew 19 verse 28 he said to them:

³⁶ Isaiah 65:22.

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:2.

³⁸ 2 Timothy 2:12.

³⁹ Revelation 2:26.

⁴⁰ Revelation 5:10.

⁴¹ Revelation 20:6.

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“Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”⁴²

And in Jeremiah chapter 23 beginning at verse five we read:

“Behold the days are coming...”⁴³

I love that phrase. You see that repeatedly throughout the prophetic literature.

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.”⁴⁴

Of course, that is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. He goes on to say:

“In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, ‘The LORD our righteousness.’”⁴⁵

Beloved, this will be an amazing time. In fact, the prophet Habakkuk tells us in chapter two and verse 14 that this will be a time when:

“...the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.”⁴⁶

So it will be a radically different time. This will be a time when Jerusalem will become, quote, “The throne of the Lord.”

In fact, the prophets tell us that the topography of the temple mount will be raised significantly higher than its current height. We are told that the Messiah himself will construct a millennial temple and a river will flow east and west from beneath the altar of the temple. It will absolutely transform the Dead Sea into a body of water that will be filled with fish. It will be a time when the effulgence of the glory of God, the ineffable shekinah of his presence will fill the millennial temple, a time when the glory of the Lord will emanate from the temple. Imagine that. We will see that. In fact, the prophets tell just hat the entire city will be a place of holiness and righteousness and justice.

Jerusalem will become the center for universal peace and prayer and worship. And it will

⁴² Matthew 19:28.

⁴³ Jeremiah 23:5.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jeremiah 23:6.

⁴⁶ Habakkuk 2:14.

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be the center of joy and rejoicing for the world. We are told that the nations of the world will come to the temple mount to see the justice of God and to learn of his law. The new Jerusalem that is detailed in Revelation 21 will descend from heaven and it will be suspended above the earthly Jerusalem, possibly aligned with the heavenly holy of holies. I mean, I am sorry, aligned with the earthly holy of holies in the millennial temple.

Imagine that. The magnificent light of the shekinah will provide heavenly illumination in which the worlds or the people of the world will walk as they come to worship the Lord in the city.

Astounding, isn't it? Talk about different. It will be a glorious time. The millennial kingdom, my friends, that messianic age that God has promised all through the Old Testament and even into the new will be the consummating bridge between human history and the eternal state.

Zechariah 14 verse nine we read:

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.”⁴⁷

Now, I must add that this is only part one, phase one of what creation is longingly awaiting, because at the end of the messianic age when God has rerenovated the earth, he is going to uncreate it. He is going to absolutely destroy it. he is going to incinerate it, because it... as well as all of the universe because of its pollution of sin. And he is going to create a new heaven and a new earth.

Peter speaks of this in 2 Peter 3:10.

“...the heavens will pass away with a roar.”⁴⁸

In the Greek the word “roar” is ροιζηδον (hroyd-zay-don’).

“...the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”⁴⁹

It is for this reason that John saw in the revelation that the Lord gave him, chapter 21 verse one he sees a new heaven and a new earth.

“...for the first heaven and the first earth passed away.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Zechariah 14:9.

⁴⁸ 2 Peter 3:10.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Revelation 21:1.

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All of creation is longing for that day. Jesus promised in Luke 21:33 that heaven and earth will pass away. The psalmist reminds us in Psalm 102 verse 25:

Of old Thou didst found the earth; And the heavens are the work of Thy hands. Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed.⁵¹

Dear friends, how utterly futile are the attempts of the environmentalists to somehow reverse the curse of the creator. How absolutely futile man's attempt to produce real hope and real change. My friends, our only hope is in Christ. Only when we have faith in him and him alone do we have change that we need, because it is through him that a sinful man can be reconciled to a holy God. It is only through him that we can be saved, be hidden in him.

So I would challenge you, first of all, those of you who are perhaps in this sanctuary, are within the sound of my voice that reject the gospel, that reject Christ, I would challenge you to examine your heart because as you hear these truths you know down deep they are true. The reason I know that you know that is because God has told me that you know that in Romans one, that you are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. And unless you repent and believe, you are going to meet your maker one day, but not as your Savior and Lord, but as your Judge and Executioner. So I would plead with you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved today.

And, dear Christian, those of us who still lament over all that we must endure this side of glory, may I encourage you to do something? Go back to Romans eight verse 18 that we looked at last week and do what Paul did. Consider these things, all of these glorious truths. Ponder them. Meditate upon them. Pray about them. Let them be a dominant theme in our thought life, in your prayer life. Share them with other people. Man, what a wonderful opportunity you have this week to go into somebody that doesn't know Christ, a friend, a loved one and say, "Man, I am so excited."

We were studying this last Sunday about the second coming of Christ and why creation and all of us groan the way we do. I am so excited about the millennial kingdom. The what? The millennial kingdom. What is that? Oh, I am so glad you asked.

I mean, that is what you have to do, my friends. I mean, don't just hear these thing and think, wow, but think, wow, God, I have got to be serious about spreading the good news of the gospel.

⁵¹ Psalm 102:25-26.

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Analyze these things. Let them be the center of gravity around which your life will orbit. And then you will be able to say with Paul:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”⁵²

Oh, what triumphant hope we have in Christ. What triumphant hope.

Let me close by giving you a summary of my thoughts poetically.

Triumph that came, dear glory bring and don the victor's crown.
Magnify your glorious name and cast your rivals down.
With sovereign might in world's full sight, complete your holy rout.
And raise your royal scepter high that every knee may bow.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as thou in heaven.
Exalted sit upon your throne that praise to you be given.
For triumph great our hearts doth ache, oh David's house restore.
Messiah come to judge and save with passion we implore.

Let's pray together.

Father, these are magnificent truths that you have revealed to us. We understand the ravages of sin and yet therefore we understand more fully the depths of your mercy and grace towards those who believe. Lord, take these words. Apply them to every heart. May sinners be saved. May saints be edified. And may you be glorified in your redeemed. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit OliveTreeResources.org.

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⁵² Romans 8:18.

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