

## Roman 8:18-25

### Introduction.

1. One of the most difficult and misused passages in the Bible is found in Romans 8:18-25.

ROM 8:18 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.

ROM 8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

ROM 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

ROM 8:21 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.

ROM 8:22 For we know that the whole [world and lower] creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

ROM 8:23 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.

ROM 8:24 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?

ROM 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

2. This passage is very difficult and some have used this difficult and obscure passage to teach things that do not agree with clear revelation.
3. It is important in interpreting this passage that it be determined if it is literal or figurative.
  - a. One cannot automatically call a passage figurative and literal.
  - b. This is determined by an examination of all the facts.
  - c. The context and other scriptures must never be ignored.
4. Does Paul literally mean that the “whole creation groans and suffers”?
5. Will the “whole creation” be delivered “from its slavery to corruption”?

### Figurative Language

1. Writers of the Bible often use figurative language to make a point. (Psa. 114:1-8).

PSA 114:1 When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,

PSA 114:2 Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion.

PSA 114:3 The sea looked and fled; The Jordan turned back.

PSA 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams, The hills, like lambs.

PSA 114:5 What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?

PSA 114:6 O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?

PSA 114:7 Tremble, O earth, before the Lord, Before the God of Jacob,

PSA 114:8 Who turned the rock into a pool of water, The flint into a fountain of water.

- a. Here the writer of this psalm describes the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage in about 1446 B.C..
- b. Note some of the language he uses to describe the exciting deliverance that came after hundreds of years of being slaves in Egypt.
  - 1) "The sea looked and fled; The Jordan turned back." (Psa. 114:3).
  - 2) "The mountains skipped like rams, The hills, like lambs." (Psa. 114:4).
  - 3) "What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?" (Psa. 114:5).
  - 4) "O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?"
- c. It is very apparent this is figurative language and these actions did not literally occur.
- d. The Old Testament frequently used figurative language to convey a message.

PSA 96:12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy

PSA 98:8 Let the rivers clap their hands; Let the mountains sing together for joy

ISA 35:1 The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus

ISA 55:12 "For you will go out with joy, And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

- e. Once again Bible students recognize that figurative language is being used and the language in these passages is not literal.
- f. Creation is being personified in these passages, that is, human emotions and actions are attributed to material creation.

### Some Additional Thoughts Leading To Examination Of Romans 8:18-25

1. One of the key words is the word "ktisis" [ktee sis] meaning "creation."
2. This word is used with several meanings in the New Testament.
  - a. It is used to mean "an institution, ordinance" in 1 Peter 2:13.

1PE 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human **institution** [ktisis], whether to a king as the one in authority,

- b. It is sometimes used of **material creation**. (Rom. 1:20, 25; Col. 1:15; 2 Pet. 3:4).

ROM 1:20 For since the **creation** [ktisis] of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

ROM 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served **the creature** [ktisis, created things] rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

2PE 3:4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of **creation** [ktisis]."

c. It is used to mean “a created thing, a creature.” (Rom. 1:25; 8:39; Heb. 4:13).

ROM 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the **creature** [ktisis, created things] rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

ROM 8:39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other **created thing** [ktisis], shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

HEB 4:13 And there is no **creature** [ktisis] hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

d. It is used to refer to **humanity in general**. (Mk. 16:15; Col. 1:23).

MAR 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all **creation** [ktisis, every human being].

COL 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all **creation** [ktisis, every human being] under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

e. It is also used to refer to **Christians** who have been born again. (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17).

GAL 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new **creation** [ktisis].

2CO 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new **creature** [ktisis]; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

3. It is apparent that the meaning of “ktisis” [ktee sis, creation] must be determined by the context.

4. To properly understand this word in Romans 8 we must carefully examine the context and not automatically assigned it a meaning.

5. We must also avoid the mistake of making a figurative passage contradict plain Bible passages.

a. We should always let plain Bible passages explain obscure passages - not vice-versa.

b. The Bible plainly teaches this earth is destined for destruction. (Matt. 24:35; 2 Pet. 3:10-13).

c. It plainly teaches that the wicked who do not obey Christ are without hope and the only resurrection in store for them is a resurrection of condemnation. (Jn. 3:36; 8:24; Eph. 2:12; 1 Thess. 4:13; Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

JOH 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, **but the wrath of God abides on him.**"

JOH 8:24 "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, **you shall die in your sins.**"

EPH 2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**

1TH 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, **as do the rest who have no hope.**

JOH 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, JOH 5:29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, **those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment** [condemnation].

ACT 24:15 having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

- d. It teaches that the wicked must fear the judgment and the hell to come. (Heb. 10:31; Matt. 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; Rev. 21:8).

HEB 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

MAT 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

MAT 25:46 "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

2TH 1:8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

2TH 1:9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

REV 21:8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

- e. The Bible never teaches or implies that animals are accountable to God or that they have any hope of heaven.

- 1) False teachers are compared to the animal world by Peter. (2 Pet. 2:12).

2PE 2:12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

- 2) There is no indication here or anywhere in scripture that animals are accountable to God and will be in heaven or hell because of their conduct.

- 3) False teachers and all evil men are accountable to God and will suffer the consequences of their sins.

### **An Examination Of Romans 8:18-25.**

1. It is important we distinguish between literal and figurative language.
2. It is vital we recognize that personification has been frequently used in the Bible.
3. We must not demand that creation being described as having human humans is literal here in Romans 8, but it is figurative in all of its other uses in the Bible.
4. Romans 8 is a Personification of the material universe looking forward to the fulfillment of its purpose.
5. It is clear that this inspirational passage is designed to provide comfort for afflicted children of God.
  - a. ROM 8:18 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.

- b. Suffering may be great, but it does not even begin to compare to the “glory” [the bliss of having a new spiritual body in heaven] that is to come. See Matt. 5:10-12.
  - c. Romans 8:31-39 was written to assure those trusting in Christ that nothing can separate them from God and His immense blessing.
6. Paul proceeds to affirm that creation “with great anticipation” awaits “the revealing of the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:19-23).

ROM 8:19 For the anxious longing of the **creation** waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

ROM 8:20 For the **creation** was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope  
 ROM 8:21 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.

ROM 8:22 For we know that the **whole** [world and lower ]**creation** groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

ROM 8:23 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.

- a. He points out that “the creation” was subjected to the slavery or bondage of slavery.
  - b. Some suggest this means that when Christ returns the earth will become a paradise and Christ will reign a 1,000 years on the earth. See Rom. 8:21 “the creation itself also will be set free from it slavery.” This language is affirmed to be literal.
  - c. This contradicts that the kingdom was “at hand.” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7).
  - d. It contradicts that Jesus said some in His time would not die before the kingdom was established. (Mk. 9:1).
  - e. It ignores the fact that Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world. (Jn. 18:36).
  - f. It overlooks the fact that Jesus is affirmed to be reigning now at the right hand of God. (Acts 2:32-36; Heb. 1:3).
  - g. It forgets the fact that the kingdom is represented as existing after Pentecost of Acts 2. (Acts 8:12; Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:6,9). These scriptures do not present “the kingdom” as “at hand,” but as present.
  - h. It ignores the fact Christians are taught their home is heaven. (Matt. 5:10-12; 6:19, 20; Jn. 14:1-3; Lk. 10:20).
7. Some have tried to argue that “the creation” refers to the “unredeemed” part of creation.

- a. This view is unfounded and unscriptural.
- b. Paul affirms that this creation will be delivered “into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.”
- c. This is not true of the unbelieving world that is in a state of condemnation without Christ.
- d. It contradicts the teaching of Jesus that most of the world will be lost. (Matt. 7:13,14).
- e. As already studied, the unbelieving world must live in fear of Christ’s coming. (Heb. 10:27, 31).

HEB 10:27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.

HEB 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

8. Some have tried to make the word “creation” in Romans 8:19 refer to the church, but this cannot be true since “the creation” is said to look forward to the revealing of the sons of God. “The sons of God” are the church.

a. Paul wrote these words in Romans 8:23.

ROM 8:23 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.

b. Paul makes it clear that Christians are separate from “the creation.”

c. Christians are “the first fruits of the Spirit.”

1) The Holy Spirit is a pledge of the Christian’s inheritance [redemption]. (Eph. 1:13,14). “arrabohn” [ahr rah **bohn**] means “deposit, pledge, earnest.” NIV “deposit guaranteeing our inheritance”

2) The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian. (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19,20; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6).

d. Paul says, “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”

9. Paul’s meaning seems to be this.

a. “The whole creation” is being personified.

1) It is figuratively represented as longing for its deliverance from its curse.

2) It does not refer to Satan, his angels or condemned mankind.

b. In reality material creation does not have the power to think, long and have human emotions. Animals can think, but are not accountable to God.

c. In figurative language it longs for the time its curse is over and longs for the time that the redeemed will be blessed by God.

d. In a figurative sense, not a literal sense, there is a connection between the present creation and a new creation wherein righteousness dwells.

e. It no more literally anticipates this time than creation literally rejoiced when Israel gained its freedom from Egyptian bondage.

1) It was such an exciting time that even the material creation is represented as having overwhelming joy.

2) The sea did not literally flee or the mountains skip as rams.

3) We must not seek to interpret symbolic language literally and make it contradict clear scripture.

10. “The whole creation” clearly differs from Christians. (Rom. 8:22, 23).

ROM 8:22 For we know that the **whole creation** groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

ROM 8:23 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.

- a. Note the language “And not only this, but also we ourselves...”
- b. The “we” refers to those “having the fruits of the Spirit.”
- c. It is these who are “waiting eagerly” for the “adoption as sons” and “the redemption” of the “body.”

## **Conclusion**

1. This passage is very comforting to Christians in every age.
2. It reveals that one day they will enjoy “the redemption” of the “body.” See 1 Cor. 15:49-53; Phil. 3:20-21.
3. Whether they die naturally, or by accident, or by persecution the grave is not their final destiny.
4. They wait “eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.” (Rom 8:19).
  - a. Material creation and the lower creation looks forward to this only figuratively, but believers will actually experience it.
  - b. They will be raised from the dead at the resurrection “on the last day” and enjoy eternity in heaven where there will be no more curse, pain, suffering, death. (Jn. 6:39, 40; 44; Rev. 22:3).

JOH 6:39 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

JOH 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

JOH 6:44 "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

REV 22:3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him;

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