

I. Introduction: Your glory in the last day will far outweigh your present suffering. v. 18

- A. Though we are sons of God, we suffer in the present age. v. 17b-18a 7:18,24 9:19-22
John 15:18 Luke 6:22 II Ti. 3:12 (persecution, the flesh, the fallen creation)
- B. The glory of our future inheritance far surpasses our present tribulations. v. 18
 - 1. Paul knew much about suffering (and glory). II Co. 11:23-28 12:4 Acts 9:16
 - 2. Our future glory infinitely transcends present hardships. II Co. 4:17 I Pe. 4:13
 - 3. Our true nature as God's children will be revealed. Col. 3:3-4 I Jo. 3:2 I Pe. 1:5
 - 4. The practical use of eschatology (the doctrine of future things/prophecy): hope.
Heb. 11:10,13-16 12:2
- C. The rest of this section elaborates on our hope: A threefold groaning for glory.
 - 1. The creation groans, awaiting our revelation in the last day. v. 19-22
 - 2. We groan as we eagerly await our final redemption. v. 23-25
 - 3. The Holy Spirit groans as He intercedes for us in prayer. v. 26-27.

II. A Christian view of the Cosmos. v. 19

- A. How does the unbelieving world view the cosmos (our environment)?
 - 1. The past:
 - a. The cosmos is self existent and has evolved by chance.
 - b. Humankind is simply an advanced animal which is part of the cosmos.
 - c. The cosmos is neither good nor bad. It simply is.
 - 2. The present:
 - a. The world is in its natural and normal state.
 - b. Life is evolving and advancing.
 - c. What problems there are with the environment are man's fault.
 - 3. The future:
 - a. The cosmos is running down.
 - b. One day earth as we know it will end: asteroid, ice age, solar event, etc.
 - c. Secularism offers no hope or meaning.
- B. The Christian view of the cosmos.
 - 1. The past:
 - a. God created the cosmos with beauty and order. Genesis 1 *It*
 - b. Man was given dominion over the world. Gen. 1:26-28 Ps. 8:5-8
 - c. Because of man's fall the world is under God's curse. Gen. 3:17-19
 - 2. The present:
 - a. The world is in an unnatural (fallen) state.
 - b. The cosmos, while still reflecting much of its original glory (1:20 Ps. 19:1f), is in a state of decay and disorder because of the curse.
 - c. The problems with our environment are because of God's judgment on man's sin, and because of mankind's poor stewardship of creation.
 - 3. The future.
 - a. One day the earth as we know it will end.
 - b. The cosmos will be renewed and glorified.
 - c. The Scriptures offer us a most blessed hope!

III. The creation groans as it awaits our glory. v. 19-22

- A. Who is anxiously waiting and groaning? Ps. 96:12 98:8 Is. 35:1 55:12 Lu. 19:40**
- B. Why is the creation groaning? It is under God's curse. v. 20-21a**
 - 1. Creation's fate is bound up with ours. 5:12 Gen. 3:17f**
 - 2. Who subjected the creation to futility (vanity)?**
 - 3. Nature now bears the *unnatural* marks of corruption. Jer. 12:4 Is. 24:6f Ecc. 1:2**
 - 4. The creation is frustrated because it falls far short of what it is intended to be.**
 - 5. Yet in spite of futility and corruption, there is hope of renewal! 16:20 Gen. 3:15**
- C. The creation will be liberated and glorified when we are glorified. v. 21**
 - 1. Our revelation will signal the renewal of the creation. II Pe. 3:10-13 Mt. 24:35**
 - 2. God's redemption of the fallen world would not be complete without a perfected creation: the new heavens and the new earth. 16:20**
- D. What will that new earth be like? Rev. 21:1-5,10-27 22:3-5 II Pe. 3:13 Isa. 11:6f 35:1f 65:25 Acts 3:19-21 Beware of excessive speculation.**
 - 1. Every effect of the curse will be removed. Rev. 22:3 Isa. 11:6-9 35:1-10**
 - 2. There will be a new creation of great glory. Isa. 65:17 66:22 II Pe. 3:13 Eph. 1:10**
 - 3. God will receive the praise which is His due for His glorious creation.**
 - 4. Is Paul speaking here of a millennial kingdom?**
- E. At the present time the creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth as it awaits the day of the revealing of the sons of God. v. 22 Mark 13:8 John 16:21-22**
 - 1. Why is the travail of childbirth such an appropriate illustration here? Gen. 3:15-16 Isa. 66:7-9 26:17-19 Rev. 12:1-2 Micah 4:9-10 Mt. 24:8**
 - 2. The creation groans and travails.**
 - a. Because of the present futility and corruption.**
 - b. Because it yearns for the glories to come.**
 - 3. The present travails are reminders of the good which is to come.**
 - 4. God will hear these groans and will answer. Acts 7:34**

IV. Concluding Applications.

- A. God alone can and will renew the creation to make it worthy of Himself.**
- B. Christians are the key to saving the environment.**
- C. If the irrational creation longs for that day, how much more should we! He. 9:28 Ga. 5:5 Phil. 3:20 Mt. 13:43**
- D. For some the pains of the new creation will be the pains of death. Isa. 13:8 I Th. 5:3**

Discussion Questions for Family Worship

- 1. Why must the children of God suffer? v. 18**
- 2. How does eschatology (Bible teaching about the end times) help us to endure suffering?**
- 3. What are the 3 "groans" in verses 19-27**
- 4. What is the difference between the way a Christian and a secular humanist view the past, present and future of the universe?**
- 5. Why does the creation yearn for the revelation of the sons of God?**
- 6. How has the curse affected the creation?**
- 7. When God cursed the world what hope did He offer?**
- 8. Why must the creation be restored?**
- 9. What will the new heavens and the new earth be like?**
- 10. Why are the travails of childbirth a good picture of the present state of creation?**
- 11. Why are Christians the key to saving the earth?**