

# “All Creation Groans”

*“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly...” Romans 8:22-23a*

## The Context of Romans 8

Verse one is one of the most reassuring verses in the New Testament. Paul wrote:

*“Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

He goes on to write that what the law could not do in terms of removing our sins and restoring us to God as holy and righteous, Jesus accomplished on the cross making us heirs of God

*“For the mind set on the flesh is death (hostile toward God), but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace...However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ (in us), that person does not belong to Christ (is not born again) (For those who are born again, we have) a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. 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 eagerly awaiting **creation** waits for the revealing of the sons and daughters of God. For the **creation** was subjected to futility, not willingly, 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.* (from verses 6-21)

**Why?** Before we dive into the specifics of the words in this verse and their meanings, let's first ask the question: *Why?* Why did and does all creation groan and suffer?

As we find with many issues in the New Testament, especially in Jesus' teachings, we must go back to Genesis. Genesis is where it all began, literally! In Chs 1 and 2 we learn the creation story—God's actual version, not the contrived version of evolutionists. Our perfect and good God created everything, in what we call nature, perfectly. There was nothing missing or flawed (imperfect). The Apostle John said it best,

*"All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."* John 1:3 (ALL MEANS ALL!)

In Ch 3, God created man and woman in His image, the perfect Holy Triune God. So everything came from God according to His will and plan, and all was perfect.

**Genesis 3 World.** Christians know the story of satan, the fallen angel, cast out of Heaven for the sin of pride, among others. He took the form of a beautiful serpent and tempted Eve to eat the fruit from a tree that God had been forbidden. So she did and he did, and all hell broke loose, literally. Through that act of disobedience, sin entered the world, and ALL creation was broken from that point forward. God pronounced three curses, one on each of the participants. That was the point at which "ALL of creation began to groan and labor with birth pangs."

**What does this mean?** Now let's examine this to understand what Paul meant and consider some examples of each. "(All) the whole of creation groans and labors with birth pangs"

**Nature Groans.** How does nature groan? It isn't human. To people unfamiliar with the Bible, this seems to be a metaphor, **but it isn't.** Before the Apostle Paul wrote these words that puzzled many, we learn the answer from the words of Jesus. Here is one example:

*"Leaving the crowd, they \*took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. And there \*arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they \*woke Him and \*said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" **And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still."** **And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.** And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?""* Mark 4:36-41

The intimacies of nature, what most of us consider God's creation, other than man, are veiled from us. That story and a few others (fig tree, walking on water, stones) cause us (or should) to draw back in amazement and awe. **Everything in creation was perfect.** Now it is broken. God did not intend that there would be earthquakes, floods, fires that destroy, mindless people wasting His valuable resources over which God gave His first command to Adam to be a good steward of all things. Droughts and even storms like hurricanes and tornados. **We know that Jesus spoke directly to them, and they obeyed!** All nature knows Who Jesus is—their Creator. They know sin wrecked them along with mankind. In response: **Creation groans!**

**Humanity Groans.** No greater example of human suffering has been known than Job. We know that God allowed satan to take away all his family and possessions. He ultimately allowed him to cause physical and emotional anguish and suffering up to the point of death. These words sum up his feelings as he

groaned before the Lord.

*“Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? For sighing has become my daily food; **my groans pour out like water.**”* Job 3:23-24

The Apostle Paul wrote,

*“For indeed, in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven... For indeed, we who are in this tent **groan, being burdened...**”* 2 Corinthians 5:2, 4

Some reading this have personally suffered great setbacks in life, deaths of loved ones, or diseases like Job that make you wish you had never been born. And most of us know people who have or still do. Even Christians groan before the Lord and question why He allows such suffering to happen—especially when it hits family or friends. I have never known anyone to receive an answer other than words in the Bible that console some; put off others. Humanity groans for the same reasons nature does. **Sin crippled ALL of creation.** No one is immune and no one escapes its reach.

These words from David the shepherd boy and chosen king of Israel were also used by Jesus on the cross.

***My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?***  
Psalm 22:1

**Travail.** Older Bible translations use this word and from it came the newer translations “labor and birth pangs” or “suffer the pains of childbirth.”

On occasion throughout thirty-eight years of marriage, I made the mistake of whining or complaining about pain men have to endure, for reasons that now escapes me, in front of my wife. I am quickly, and justly, reminded that I gave birth to zero

children. Travail is the word that describes the pain women experience in childbirth throughout labor all the way to delivery.

The Apostle Paul (who was not married) used it to describe the feelings of pain ALL of creation has, is, and will continue to experience sin the world and mankind were broken by sin. Following are applications of this word from Jesus.

**(End times)** *“For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the **beginning of the birth pains.**”* Matthew 24:5-8

*“Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain because her hour has come...”* John 16:21-22

**No one suffered more for Christ than the Apostle Paul.** *“Are they servants of Christ?—I am speaking as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent adrift at sea. 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 at sea, dangers among false brothers; **I** have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.”* 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

**I have Good News. Your story does not end where you are!** No matter how much groaning and suffering are yours right now, take heart. The Cure came in the Person of Jesus. Following are four encouraging verses to keep us focused on Jesus.

- (Jesus said) *“but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one is going to take your joy away from you.”* John 16: 21-22
- (Apostle Paul said) *...we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—**for we walk by faith, not by sight.*** 2 Corinthians 5: 2-7
- (Apostle Peter said) *“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”* 1 Peter 5:10
- (Apostle John wrote) *“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be **no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.** There shall be **no more pain,** for the former things have passed away. And the One seated on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new. Revelation 21:4*

I hope these words have helped you understand better where you are, and perhaps, at least part of the reason *why*. More than that I hope they have encouraged you that, if you are born-again in Christ, you will soon be Home with Him—fully healed in every way. Your groaning turned to praise. Your travail to

joy.

At the close of the book of Revelation, the close of the Bible, Jesus said these words,

***"Yes, I am coming soon."*** Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! Revelation  
22:20

*Walter*