

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Creation-Vanity-Hope

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What comes first to your mind when you hear the word “creation?” Believers in God probably gravitate to the “creation” God spoke into existence (*Genesis 1:1, Psalm 33:6*). God’s creative voice founded inanimate space and the ground upon which to place His ultimate creation, man. Angels in heaven were created; animals on earth were created; but only man was created in the image of God (*Colossians 1:16, Genesis 1:20-27*).

Paul points us to this creation in the first chapter of Romans. He declares the creation we see offers us the opportunity to “clearly see” the “invisible” (*Romans 1:20*). God’s invisible everlasting power and Divine wisdom remain the proverbial elephant in the room for many, but for believers, they shine brightly through the focused eyes of faith.

When we come to Romans 8:20 we read, “*For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it in hope.*” Do animals “hope?” Do the stars in the heavens have “will” in determining to shine? Paul seems to be speaking of another creation, for in verse 19 we read: “*For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God*”

(*Romans 1:19*). Paul’s use of “creation” forces us to set our sights on the creature, man. Man is God’s creature who exercises his will in conducting his affairs and can cherish hope to energize his future. But do men of the world have such a strong expectation for the revealing of the sons of God that they earnestly wait for the consummate event? Do you talk to many atheists or non-Christians who cannot wait till the sons of God are finally manifested? Or, does Paul want us to understand “creation” in yet another sense?

The “creation” who has “will” and exercises “hope” in verse 20, also has an “earnest expectation” for the “revealing of the Sons of God in the previous verse 19. In verse 21 we read: “*that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.*” With these two bookend verses on each side of the creation of verse 18, we can understand “creation” as denoting the “*new creature*” who has been “*created in Christ Jesus*” (2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10).

Paul directs our attention to the day when the revealing of the Sons of God will occur in a glorious way when the Christian’s body is redeemed from the grave (*Romans*

8:23). While all bodies will be raised from the dead, the glorified bodies of Christians will gloriously distinguish those adopted by God as sons from all of creation (*cf. John 5:28-29, 2 Corinthians 5:1-4*).

There is something that those created in Christ have in common with all of mankind. It is vanity. This is not boastful pride, but the futility of life. Life is transient, and we cannot stop the changes. We cannot keep our bodies young, and our children babies. As much as we might try, we cannot keep the good times and avoid the bad. While “the whole creation” groans with inescapable pain, Christians who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan as well as life changes to death (*Romans 8: 22-23*).

As “first fruits” promise a “harvest,” God promises the Christian a glorious redemption from the grave. While neither God’s creation in Christ nor “the whole creation” of man “willed” to experience futility, God placed all under such powerless vanity. However, only the Christian is “*subjected in hope.*” With expectation of the body’s redemption from death, God’s spiritual creation in Christ eagerly waits for the glory that lies ahead. What a blessing to face life’s variable changes with certain hope (*Romans 8:23-24*)!