

July 6

INTRODUCTION

1. It's the great and blessed doctrine of sanctification which occupied Paul's writings (6:1-8:17a). Christ has been shown to have done a work for us so the Spirit can do a work in us (vv 1-4).

2. Life, sonship, and joint-heirship with Christ are blessed truths. A believer is no longer obligated to the flesh, but he is to the Spirit (vv. 12-17a). That's wonderful.

3. Abruptly, yet not so; the doctrine of suffering is introduced. Sonship implies suffering as something inevitable. Not as a matter of punishment, but rather of discipline ultimately leading to glory (v. 17b).

1. COMPARISONS STATED vv. 17, 18

a. Association v. 17b

Acts 14:22

The Greek construction "if so be" is found 6 times in the N.T. (Ro. 8:9, 17; 1 Cor. 8:5; 15:15; 2 Thess. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:3). Best rendered here "inasmuch as." Sufferings are needed to prepare one for glory. Our relationship with Him brings suffering with Him (cf. 2 Tim. 2:12). Note only other occurrence of the verb in 1 Cor. 12:26.

b. Disproportion v. 18a

(wait vs 19, 23, 25)

"Reckon" is verb meaning to conclude and a favorite with Paul. Here is spiritual arithmetic. There is no comparison between suffering and glory (cf. 2 Cor. 4:17, 18); it is utterly disproportionate.

c. Certainty v. 18b

Glory is to be revealed in (KJV) the believer, but better to usward i.e. not only in us, to us, but through us. It is an astonishing verse describing God's ultimate purpose of redemption (cf. Col. 3:4; 2 Thess. 1:10). In view of what is yet to come, the present sufferings are as nothing. Blessed be God.

2. CONFIRMATIONS vv. 19-25

Here are items to show that there is a glory to come following suffering.

a. Appeal from creation vv. 19-22

The word expectation is a double compound substantive found only here and Phil. 1:20 in the N.T. It means to watch eagerly with outstretched head. Creation waits for God's sons to be revealed at His coming. Verb wait is present tense.

1) Its present v. 20

God has subjected creation, in consequence of the Fall, to become empty. It lost its original significance and design. This was not a self-subjection, but done by God. God was the moving Cause in the event. Marvelously, God subjected creation "in hope" i.e. God has a plan which reaches into eternity. Therefore "hope" lies ahead for creation in the millennium and in the new earth and new heavens.

2) Its future v. 21

While v. 20 provides a reason for "earnest expectation" from the present, this verse provides one from the future. There is currently a bondage of corruption (disease, decay, suffering, death, destruction), but ultimately creation will be brought "into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." The liberty consists in and results from a share in the glory of the children of God (cf. v. 19). Who can possibly evaluate what is yet coming!

3) Its need v. 22

Here is a statement why creation has an expectation. It is an expression of Christian conscience (we know as in 2:2; 3:19; 7:14; 8:22, 26, 28). "Groan" and "travail" denote creation as in birth pangs to bring forth what is new and fair. "All the voices of nature are in the minor key."

b. Attitude of Believers vv. 23-25

1) Their groan v. 23

Rational creation has same feelings as irrational creation (cf. v. 22 for the same verb groan). While having the first fruit of the Spirit, believers also wait (same verb as 19) for adoption (adult son placing as v. 15), namely body redemption (i.e. the outward of the inward already given). This explains why believers become ill during this age. A new body awaits the coming of Christ.

2) Their hope vv. 24, 25

The attitude of hope shows there is more in store for the believer than he already has. Hope suggests something unseen and unrealized. Hope gives holy patience (patient endurance) which expects something more (same verb as vv. 19, 23).

CONCLUSION Suffering now--yes. But things will change into infinite glory. God, hasten that day! Amen.

Be faithful and hopeful!