

# ***London Justice House of Prayer - Donna Taylor***

## ***May 4, 2025***

### ***Romans 8:18-21***

#### **I. Review - Dream - Romans 8:18-39**

In this dream, the Lord spoke Romans 8:18 and on to me. I was instructed to read it and repeated over and over until I woke up. From that time to this, I have read it and have continued to ask the Lord what He was saying to me. What I've been sharing with you in this teaching, is what I've come to understand what He's speaking to us right now. I have listened to some who teach on this subject, including N.T. Wright along with reading from his book, "Into the Heart of Romans," which I have referred to.

**"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)**

What is the Lord telling us today in applying this in our lives? This passage in Romans 8 is on God's heart for us as believers to come to a fuller understanding of what He revealed to Paul. This letter was written to the people of Rome. Again, we need to have an understanding of their culture and circumstances they were enduring. They needed to understand that what things they were suffering was nothing in comparison to the glory that would be revealed in them.

It is no different for us today and is why the Lord is speaking so much to many teachers and ministry leaders bringing assurance to the body of Christ, that what we are suffering now will produce in us a far greater weight of glory. We also need to understand what Paul is meaning when he uses the word "glory" in this passage. He is not referring to heaven in this passage, he is talking about the glory of God being manifested in believers. We are in the process of being drawn to a greater place of maturity in the Lord. The days in which we are living is revealing more of the evil that is present all around us. We must be equipped to be the overcomers Paul references at the end of this chapter.

#### **II. From Suffering To Glory**

##### **A. The Glory of God**

Paul has declared that we suffer with Christ so that we may also be glorified in him. But what does 'glory' actually mean? **(Romans 8:17)** This verse actually

is a kind of bridge in laying a foundation for the rest of this passage. Paul develops the connection of suffering and glory showing that Christians must go the way of Jesus. He assures us that our present status as children of God guarantees participation in the present and future joy of God's Kingdom. Scripture often indicates that God leads His children through suffering before they reach His glory.

There are two primary meanings of glory in this passage, and they fit together. 'Glory' here means, **the glorious presence of God himself dwelling within us by the spirit, and the wise, healing, reconciling rule of God's people over the whole creation.** This entire passage never mentions going to heaven. When Paul is talking about glory here, it's not about us going to heaven when we die, but what we are to be living examples of Him here on earth.

We are glory carriers. We carry the very presence of God within us. It is through the working of Holy Spirit in our lives that we grow and mature in Him as Paul writes.

**"But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."  
(II Corinthians 3:18)**

Beholding as in a mirror indicates "reflecting" as well as "looking into." As we behold the glory of the Lord, we are continually transformed in the same image by the Spirit of the Lord. We then, with ever-increasing glory, reflect what we behold. What we have learned through our studies of the importance of keeping our gaze fixed on Jesus, "We become what we behold."

### **III. God's Ultimate Purpose for Creation**

#### **A. The Challenging Call for Spirit-Filled People**

The primary meaning of the word 'glory' is *doxa* in Greek and *kabod* in Hebrew, is dignity, worth or status. The Hebrew has the notion of 'weight,' as we might speak of the 'weighty presence' of referring to Holy Spirit in our midst, or even the 'weighty words' of an important speech or sermon.

This idea of dignity, worth and status applies to both of the two primary meanings Paul is teaching. We are not only to be glory carriers of His presence, we are also called to rule over the whole creation.

**“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Romans 8:19-21)**

We are more aware than ever before of the crisis in ecology and climate change. That is, of course, controversial. It is driven on both sides of the debate, by political and ideological agendas. Many of us would like to hold back in even discussing this issue. When we look back in history, this is not a new problem at all. There are arguments a generation ago about the ill effects of smoking tobacco, the evidence is massive and mounting daily. From greenhouse gases to bad farming practices not to mention nuclear accidents and ‘dirty bombs.’

## **B. History Repeats Itself**

Quote from N. T. Wright. “The post-Enlightenment world has twisted the vocation to be image-bearing stewards of creation into the chance to exploit creation to serve our pride, or greed, or both. This, alas, is scarcely new. Ancient empires, not least the Romans, routinely used a ‘scorched’ earth’ policy, literally or metaphorically, when it suited them. A rebel country or city might be rendered uninhabitable, with its wells poisoned and its fields sown with salt. It was the smaller-scale equivalent of what we now face.”

He continues, 'This present passage is a primary resource for our response as believers according to what Paul has written. Sadly, the western church has regularly ignored this theme. According to scripture, we are to take care of what God has given into our care. This passage clearly speaks of our obligation to be concerned with creation.' We are not to cross a line and worship creation, but we are to rule over creation according to the Word of God.

Unfortunately, the King James version of the word “creation,” has rendered it as “creature.” The word “*ktsis*” in Hebrew can be translated creature or creation.

**“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Romans 8:19-21 KJV)**

Once you translate *ktisis* as ‘creature,’ the meaning has become unclear. Thereby, causing a misinterpretation of this passage. Creature causes us to think of a small animal and does not take into account of what Paul is actually saying here. Creation speaks of all that God created in the beginning. Just as Adam was given authority over all creation, through the redemptive work of the Cross, we have now been given back that same authority.

When Paul begins verse 18 with the word “consider,” he uses the verb *logizomai* which means “I work it out” or “I reckon it up.” If Paul has just said the present sufferings don’t compare with the coming glory, why would he go on to explain in verse 19 about creation longing for God’s children to be revealed? By digging down, not to the human problem of sin and death, but to the “cosmic” or “world” problem of futility and corruption, we can find answers to our questions on where the whole passage is going.

What happens when we read this text within the world of Paul’s day, within the worldview, narratives and assumptions his contemporaries would have in mind? The world where Paul went as a missionary was dominated by Rome, by Caesar. Caesar was considered to be the world leader who would bring world peace and a utopia to all peoples. He was believed to be worshipped. Paul, in his missionary journeys taught Jesus as the true *Kyrios*, the world’s true Lord, in places where that word, and the claims that went with it, were firmly linked to Caesar.

In this letter to Rome, Paul is declaring powerfully that, like all pagan claims, the Roman claim is actually propaganda. Rome’s supposed glory was built on ruthless military conquest, often backed up by crucifixions. For Paul, it was ‘creation’ the good world made by the good creator God, but now groaning in labor pains, longing to give birth to the real new age as opposed to the glossy fake one imagined by the Roman court beliefs.

Paul was thinking with the Bible rather than with the political propaganda. He believed in the ancient Hebrew promise of new creation. The Old Testament points ahead, even in the midst of Israel’s rebellion and failure, to the promise that the God who made the world would one day remake it. We find this promise in several scriptures from Isaiah 11, Psalm 72 and Isaiah 35 and 40. Paul is drawing from these prophecies and revelations.

We need to understand that everything God did and said in the Old Testament was a picture and foreshadowing of what He would do through His church, the body of Christ. This hasn’t been taught widely in the church, but God is highlighting this today.

Just as in Paul's day, the belief that the world would experience peace, harmony, and fruitfulness through Augustus in the way he portrayed his rule and reign in the public arena, is still happening in our day in the global political arena.

They didn't have the news sources we have today, no internet no television, and all the devices we have at hand today to sort through what is true and what is false. He used coins with scenes of a peaceful life, a plentiful harvest, and were also carved in marble, statues, inscriptions and particularly poems. They continued pushing this message all across their empires and throughout Paul's lifetime. The message being: you've never had it so good, and it was all because Caesar's heir, Augustus was on the throne. He was bringing peace and justice to the world, or so they were told. Fear was the rule of the day. Don't even think about rebellion.

We find this again in our day through the use of the guillotine and followed later with the Holocaust. We can't look back in Paul's day and think we are more civilized and wouldn't use the same tactics to control the masses and declare "peace" and "safety," without the gospel message, leaving Jesus out of it and God removed from every part of society possible in our day! We've already seen it rise up and show its ugly head and the evil that has been exposed has been somewhat shocking. Even though we have known and described in scripture.

### **C. God's People Comforted**

It hasn't happened just in the secular world, it is also happening within the people of God - ourselves. It's happened today when God's people grab hold of something that looks like a good gift, but just like Caesar's promises, it's all smoke and mirrors dust and ashes. Where the Biblical meaning of creation and new creation has been made unclear and difficult to understand through a false narrative in Christian teaching. What Paul was doing here was reminding the people in his day of what was already prophesied in the Torah. We have come to understand, the New Testament is concealed or hidden in the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament.

**"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God.  
"Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her,  
That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned;  
For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all  
her sins." The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
"Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert  
A highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:1-3)**

**“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,  
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of  
the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and  
understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might The Spirit  
of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is  
in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight  
of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But  
with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with  
equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth  
with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips  
He shall slay the wicked.” (Isaiah 11:1-4)**

Jesus, of course, accomplished this with His first coming in the spiritual realm. (Col. 2:15) when He made a public display in disarming the principalities and spiritual wicked rulers of darkness. He will fulfill it literally and spiritually at the end of this age. (Rev.19:11-16; 20:11-15).

The Old Testament here points ahead to a time coming of global harmony. Two things stand out here in these passages. This would come about through the work of Jesus, the David Messiah, and also reveals the whole earth will be full of God’s glory. His glory was already revealed in the wilderness Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple, when His glorious presence came in such manifestation, the priests could not stand to minister, but fell on their faces.

These promises were found, developed, studied intensely and celebrated in the second-Temple Jewish writings, also known as the ‘apocalyptic writings,’ which means they were ‘revelatory,’ because they speak of God the creator suddenly revealing his new creation as the shocking fulfillment of his age-old plan. The early Christians had no problem understanding and embracing this biblical theme of new creation for the reason that it had begun to be fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus. They believed that, by the spirit, this new creation was powerfully at work both *in* faithful human beings and *through* them in the wider world.

#### **IV. The Glory of God Revealed**

##### **A. The Believer’s Authority**

We need to understand the biblical meaning of ‘glory.’ The two key words; the Hebrew word *kabod*, and the Greek word *doxa*, does include things such as radiance and brilliant light. That’s what we mostly think Paul is talking about. This isn’t their basic meaning, and it isn’t what Paul normally means. In the Hebrew scriptures, ‘glory’ regularly comes to refer specifically to *rule* or *power*. That’s why ‘glory’ is regularly a royal term and is symbolized visually in crowns.

Sometimes displayed with rays of bright light streaming in all direction. The bright light isn't the glory itself, the light *tells you about* the glory, the weighty dignity and power. The honor of the person is *symbolized* by that bright light. So it doesn't mean God's glory will light up the world with a visible light, it means God's creative power and wisdom will shine out visibly all around.

This is a major theme for Paul of the promise of the coming glory - the glory of human beings put in charge of the world. It is related closely with the promise of resurrection, which is built on the foundation of Jesus' own resurrection.

**“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.” (I Corinthians 15:20-28)**

**“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field, The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.” (Psalm 8:3-8)**

We find in these passages a more in-depth explanation of all Jesus accomplished on the cross and the promise of our future resurrection. Paul draws from Psalm 8 in teaching the vocation of human beings to be God's stewards in looking after his world: crowned with glory and honor, with all things put in subjection under their feet. Psalm 8 is vital as it picks up and focuses on the promise of Genesis 1, of humans, made in the image of God and given responsibility for God's creation.

In this way **two meanings**, the **presence of God** and the **authority of humans**, converge. In Genesis 1, we find that all humans are image-bearers; all humans possess royal dignity. Even though many ancient Jews read Psalm 8 referencing Jesus fulfilling this, Paul agrees Jesus is the truly human being, but includes the David promise, that Jesus, as Messiah, *shares this role with all his people*. In Romans 8:29, Paul writes we are to be *conformed to the image of the son*, ‘so that he might be the firstborn of a large family.’ In the coming of the gospel, we find how all this will work out. Those who belong to Jesus, who are indwelt by his spirit, share his vocation as described in Genesis 1 and Psalm 8.

## **B. The Revealing of the Sons of God**

Keeping all this in mind, we look again at what Paul said in vs. 17. “We are fellow heirs with the Messiah, as long as we suffer with Him so that we may be glorified with Him. Glorified here is another way of saying, ‘receiving the inheritance,’ which is the role of humans over creation. With the Messiah, we are to be set in restorative authority over God’s world.

In vs. 18 he contrasts the ‘present time’ with the ‘coming age.’ In the present time, since the resurrection of Jesus, the old age and the new age overlap. They run in parallel. In the final ‘coming age,’ the glory will be fully revealed, but it is already at work. Again, the “already, but not yet.” At the end of the verse, he uses the term ‘reckon,’ meaning he has ‘worked it out.’ What he says here goes closely with what he says in II Corinthians 4 where he declares that the present troubles are a slight momentary affliction that cannot begin to compare with the eternal weight of glory.

At the end of the verse, he says emphatically that the glory will most certainly be unveiled *for us* or *upon us*. He uses the Greek words, *apokalyphthenai eis hemas*, meaning the divine glory is going to be unveiled upon us. We will find that we are clothed in it, invested with it. This requires, as it is given in Romans 8, a full in-depth understanding of the holy Spirit and at the same time, the glorious divine presence in the Messiah’s people and the one who enables them to be the true humans within God’s present purposes.

Thus, the coming sudden unveiling, the ‘apocalypse’ at the center of it all will be the return of Jesus himself, we redeemed humans will be invested, equipped, with that divine authority over the world that already belongs to Jesus himself. Jesus says at the end of Matthew 28 that He has been given all authority and already His followers are commissioned to go into the world to make that authority a reality. In the end that work will be complete. We are among those who have been given this “Great Commission.”



**“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)**

It's important that we get our minds around how all this fits together. Paul is saying in this present passage, it is Jesus' people *themselves* who are the subject of the 'apocalypse.' They (we) are to be 'unveiled.' Paul states in Colossians 3:4, when the Messiah appears, '*you too will be revealed* with him in glory.' We normally think of *Christians* waiting for the *Messiah* to be revealed; but here it is the *cosmos* (all of creation) waiting for the *Christians* to be revealed!

### **C. Creation Eagerly Waiting**

In verse 19, Paul uses three Greek words, *apokaradokia*, *apokalypsin*, and *apekdechetai*, constructed in such a way that most translators make 'creation itself,' the subject. *Apokaradokia* means 'eager longing.' It gives the sense of someone straining their head forward to see what's coming around the corner. It literally means 'the straining forward of the creation is eagerly awaiting the revelation of God's children.' The second word, *apokalypsin*, is *the revealing of God's children*. That is you and me. This Paul declares is what creation is waiting for!

**“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.” (Romans 8:19)**

Paul has been assured this will be the revelation of God and Jesus. What we need to understand here is because this is how God made the world from the very beginning, that creation is longing for us. Human beings, Jesus followers, spirit-filled temples to be unveiled as the glorified, the empowered, stewards of creation, called to restore creation to its proper purpose.

What creation longs for the most now is that we, followers of Jesus, spirit-filled believers to be unveiled as the glorified stewards of creation. We are called to restore creation to its rightful purpose. Of course, creation is waiting for its Creator, but is longing for those in whom the Holy Spirit is at work.

A day is coming when we, Jesus' followers, shall be revealed as exactly that. This is what the book of Revelation says about God's plan for his redeemed; we are rescued in order to become the 'royal priesthood!'

Verses 20 and 21 gives the explanation for what Paul has just stated about this revealing of the sons of God. He begins verse 20 with the Greek word, *gar*, which in most translations says, 'for.' But this can also be translated as 'you see.' It's here that Paul references Genesis 3:17-19, where we find the 'first mention principle,' of what happened to creation with the fall of Adam and Eve. He has actually had the whole creation story in mind throughout this writing.

**“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”  
(Romans 8:20-21)**

**“Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:17-19)**

Adam's sin meant not only that he and Eve were driven from the garden, but the earth would now produce thorns and thistles. God's plan for creation began in what God did in chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis. It was to be something great and wonderful, but was to happen through the stewardship of mankind, His image-bearers. Their rebellion meant the plan and purpose God had was thwarted. It suffered from 'frustration, or *futility*,' the Greek word, *mataiotes*. Without wise and obedient humans to guide it, creation was going nowhere and it knew it.

## **V. Creation's Freedom**

### **A. Believer's Authority Over Creation**

This brings us to an often misunderstood translation of verse 21. Some teach that Paul was saying creation will *share* the 'glorious freedom of God's children,' or something similar to that. That's simplifying what Paul was actually saying. What Paul is saying concerning 'freedom,' here as we understand the Greek terms he's using, is better translated as *creation's* freedom, as opposed to its slavery to decay; but the 'glory' here is our authority *over* creation.

We too, of course, will be free from sin and death, but that's not the point Paul is making here. *Creation* will be set free from its slavery to decay; and will happen

when *the Messiah's people* are glorified, raised from the dead and given their intended authority over the world. This is the revelation of God's children from verse 19. A better translation of verse 21 goes something like this: creation will in that new day 'enjoy the freedom that comes when God's children are glorified.' As to the suffering, he goes on to describe it in verses 22-27, which we will look at in the next session.

What Paul has described in verses 17 to 21, the hope for all creation, has simply been ignored by a large number of Christians to this day. Other key passages, gives a fuller account of what Paul is saying here. II Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 3:10, and Acts 3:21.

**“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”  
(II Corinthians 5:17)**

**“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Philippians 3:10)**

**“Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:21)**

When man fell, that fall brought the same fate upon creation that was upon man because man was the one in authority over creation. Based on vs. 21, we see that creation will also be liberated with the children of God. The term here “children of God,” is referring to believers, not the whole human race. This text is giving a picture of the new and heaven and the new earth that is depicted in Revelation 21 and 22.

But verses 20-21 is where Paul emphasizes this sense of double glory - the glorious return of YHWH and rule of the believers. This needs to take root in our hearts and lives in order for us to understand the depth of what Paul is teaching here in this chapter. Here is what many in the church would say today. Maybe in God's new creation we will have this authority to set creation free; but we are not yet raised from the dead! The new heavens and new earth aren't here yet; so there's not much we can do at the moment, is there?

## **B. Resurrection Power**

The right answer to these questions and line of thought would be to refer them to Romans 8 and Colossians 3, that we have already been raised with the

Messiah, so we are according to scripture, in the power of the spirit, to believe the eventual resurrection in God's world. New creation has begun with Jesus' resurrection and the gift of the spirit. This is our starting point.

So, what is our present task as the church? To do exactly what this passage and the other key passages tell us. God promises to do for the whole creation *what He did for Jesus in the resurrection*, nothing more and nothing less. Regardless of what science tells us in the great debate we have going on right now, we look to the Word and that's where we take our stance.

The resurrection of Jesus is the start of the new creation. And when we understand Resurrection the way Paul does, according to scriptures, we will see that it takes the same kind of faith to believe in the eventual renewal of God's world as it takes to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

This leads us to understand more of what Paul is describing here when he says, he 'reckons,' "he has worked it out," that the present suffering cannot be compared to the coming glory is the same kind of faith in Jesus, he speaks of in Romans 6, that we are already dead to sin and alive to God in the Messiah. We too, need to 'reckon,' "or work it out," through all these passages, that these things are basic to walking in the fear of the Lord, with His wisdom and our continual desire to go deeper into His Word. As Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free."

Again, this is the "already, but not yet," Kingdom of God at work in our lives.