

OUR INCREDIBLE FUTURE

Five times I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, and dangers among false brothers; toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing. [2 Corinthians 11:24-27]

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. [Romans 8:18]

For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience. In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. [Romans 8:19-27]

Present sufferings to future glory means...

1) Groans to glory

...the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. [v.22]

...we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption... [v.23]

...the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings. [v.26]

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. [v.18-19]

Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him as he is. [1 John 3:2]

2) Futility to freedom

For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to futility...in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free [v.19-21]

3) Decay to deliverance

...creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay [v.21]

...eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. [v.23]

If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one. [C.S. Lewis]

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