

Romans 8:22-23 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Romans Overview Chart](#) - Charles Swindoll

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's chart above				

- R **Ruin** (Romans 1:17 – 3:20) – The utter sinfulness of humanity
- O **Offer** (Romans 3:21-31) – God's offer of justification by grace
- M **Model** (Romans 4:1-25) – Abraham as a model for saving faith
- A **Access** (Romans 5:1-11) – The benefits of justification
- N **New Adam** (Romans 5:12-21) – We are children of two "Adams"
- S **Struggle w/ Sin** (Romans 6:1-8:39) Struggle, sanctification, and victory

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together * until now. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: oidamen (1PRAI) gar hoti pasa e ktisis sustenazei (3SPAI) kai sunodinei (3SPAI) achri tou nun:

Amplified: We know that the whole creation [of irrational creatures] has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: For we know that the whole creation groans and travails together up to this moment

Young's Literal: for we have known that all the creation doth groan together, and doth travail in pain together till now.

FOR WE KNOW THAT THE WHOLE CREATION (continually) GROANS AND SUFFERS THE PAINS OF CHILDBIRTH TOGETHER UNTIL NOW: oidamen (1PRAI) gar hoti pasa e ktisis sustenazei (3SPAI) kai sunodinei (3SPAI) achri tou nun:

- Ps 48:6; Je 12:11; Jn 16:21; Rev 12:2
- [Romans 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For (gar) - Notice the little preposition "for" (there are over 7000 "for's" in Scripture) and if the **context** indicates, as it does in this passage, that the "for" is a **term of explanation**, pause and ask yourself what is the Spirit seeking to explain? **In fact, stop reading right now and observe** the for **and see if you can determine what it is explaining**. Notice how **pausing to ponder** will always force you to examine the **context**. You can (and should) practice this simple discipline every time you encounter a **for**, and while not every instance is a term of explanation, a "for" at the beginning of a verse is almost always is used with that grammatical sense. **I guarantee that if you begin to "pause and ponder," you will radically rejuvenate your "Read Through the Bible in a Year" program!** You might even get a small journal and begin to keep notes on what the Spirit illuminates and how this truth can be applied to your daily life. As you practice **interrogating the text (for, therefore, but, so that, etc)** with **5W/H** questions such as "*What's the **for** explaining?*", you will begin to learn to **(1) Read the Bible inductively** (power point overview) and to **(2) Meditate** (see also **Primer on Biblical Meditation**) on the Scripture. **Meditation** or "chewing the cud" of the Scripture (cf Mt 4:4, Job 23:12-note, Jer 15:16) so to speak is a vanishing discipline in our fast paced, hi tech, low touch society, but a spiritual discipline which God promises to greatly bless (See Ps 1:1-note, Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note, Joshua 1:8-note, cf Ps 4:4, 19:14, 27:4, 49:4, 63:6, Ps 77:6, 77:12, Ps 104:34, Ps 119:15, 119:23, 119:27, Ps 119:48, 119:78, Ps 119:97, 119:99, Ps 119:148, 143:5, Ps 145:5) From the preceding passages which "organ" of our being is most often involved/engaged in meditation? What are the subjects or the focus of meditation? **Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like eating without chewing.** We must read...

Scripture every day
 And meditate on what God said
 To fight temptation from the world
 And live a life that's Spirit led
 (see note) --Sper

We know (1492)(**eido**) - The verb for **know** is **eido** which pictures an absolute, beyond a doubt knowing. How Christians know this is not specifically stated.

The divine curse extends through the entire created cosmos, not just to the earth. That is, the law of entropy operates throughout the cosmos. Since it was man's sin that brought God's curse on the ground-- the very elements of the created earth, the "dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7) out of which all things were made by God--it may be that his sin had universal repercussions. The creation is now travailing like a woman about to deliver a child. Its delivery date into the glorious new age to come is tied with the revealing of the children of God in glory.

The whole creation - the entire universe, that which we can see and that which is not visible to our modern telescopes! All creation! This is an amazing thought!

Creation (2937) (**ktisis [word study]** from **ktizo** = create, form or found) here refers to what was created both animate and inanimate, the creation representing the sum total of everything created.

Morris reminds us that the "**Creation** is not undergoing DEATH PANGS ... but BIRTH PANGS.!"

Jews were familiar with God's promise of a redeemed world, a renewed creation. In behalf of the Lord, Isaiah predicted, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." (Isa 65:17).

Jews anticipated a glorious time when all pain, oppression, slavery, anxiety, sorrow, and persecution would end and the Lord would establish His own perfect kingdom of peace and righteousness

Creation does not here include the heavenly angels, who, although created beings, are not subject to corruption. The term obviously does not include Satan and his host of fallen angels, the demons for they have no desire for a godly, sinless state being fully aware that they are divinely sentenced to eternal torment.

Groans together (4959)(**sustenazo** from **sun** = together + **stenazo** = to groan) is used figuratively to personify the creation crying out a symphony of utterances like a person caught in a dreadful situation without immediate prospect of deliverance. But because of the redemption price paid for on Calvary by the Creator Christ, the Creation will be one day (soon) fully redeemed by Him. If the Creation could shout, it would shout "Hallelujah!" Only in Ro 8:22. Not in Septuagint.

Classical Greek Used only by Euripides (Fifth Century B.C.) in Greek writings prior to the New Testament, **sustenazō** means "groaning with" someone or some group. It is related to the term **stenazō** (4578), which refers to an unexpressed deep feeling of inner sorrow which is translated variously in the New Testament as "grieve, groan, sigh, murmur." This term is then prefixed with **sun** (4713) (with the standard loss of n before s),

meaning “with,” to signify a groaning “together.” It means more than groaning “with” as alongside others, but a groaning “together” as in sharing the same inner sorrow (Schneider, “sustenazō,” Kittel, 7:601).

New Testament Usage Paul is the only New Testament writer to use the term. In Romans 8:22 he wrote, “The whole creation groaneth ... until now.” Schneider states, “It is a sighing in which all non-human creation is at one The reason for the sighing is that through the fall of Adam creation is subject to bondage (v. 20)” (ibid., 7:602). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

Paul uses **sustenazo** as a powerful metaphor for the yearning of creation in its entirety (συν-) for liberation to “the glorious freedom of God’s children” (Ro 8:21, cf. Ro 8:19). The “groaning” of the ktisis (creation) corresponds to that of believers (Ro 8:23) and of the Spirit (Ro 8:26; → stenazo; sunodino). The basis of creation’s continuing enslavement to transitoriness and mortality is the “fall” of mankind (cf. Ge 3:17; Isa 24:1ff., 20; 2 Esdr 4:26ff.; Gen. Rab. 2 [3b]; 5 [4d]; 12 [8d]), through which creation — “unwillingly” (ouch ekousa, Ro 8:20) — was drawn into the fate of alienation from God. Therefore it longs (→ apokaradokia → apekdechomai v. 19) for the fulfillment of its own real destiny through the renewal of mankind. (Exegetical Dictionary of the NT)

TDNT - In Romans 8:22–27 the apostle speaks of a triple sighing, that of all creation, that of Christians and that of the Spirit. This sequence is a crescendo. In Romans 8:22 Paul declares that all creation up to this present sighs together and with pain awaits regeneration.⁶ The reason for the sighing is that through the fall of Adam creation is subject to bondage (Romans 8:20). It waits with longing for the day when the glory of the children of God will be manifested. But Christians sigh too, Romans 8:23. To be sure, their situation differs from that of the rest of creation. For they are already a new creation in Christ and as first-fruits of eschatological being they possess the Spirit. Yet their body is still subject to corruption. Because they wait for the redemption of their body, namely, the transforming of their earthly body into the body of glory, they sigh. To the sighing of creation and the children of God there then corresponds the sighing of the Spirit, Romans 8:26f. Since the reference is not to something which takes place in us, the apostle cannot be thinking of the sighing of Christians in prayer. He is referring rather to times when we are unable to pray, when because of our “weakness” we do not know what we ought to pray for. This means that he cannot have in view speaking in tongues or the inarticulate stammering of ecstasies in worship.¹⁰ What he is saying is rather that the Spirit acts in our place and intercedes for us, performing the function of a Paraclete and helping us in our weakness in prayer. The process which Paul has in view is thus a process in the heavenly and divine sphere.¹² Hence the στεναγμοὶ ἄλῃτοι (v. 26) are not unspoken, wordless sighs but sighs which cannot be grasped in words, like the ρητὰ ἡμᾶς of 2Co 12:4. But God understands the language of the Spirit, “because he intercedes for the saints in a way which corresponds to the will of God,” v. 27.

Suffers the pains of childbirth together (4944) (**sunodino** from **sun** = together + **odino** = to be in pain, as a woman in labor) means to feel the pains of travail with or to be in travail together. It is used figuratively here to describe the agony creation experiences as like a woman in childbirth, awaiting its future regeneration.

Notice that the Greek prefix **sun** (= **with**) (Click word study) is associated with both **groan together** and **suffer together** signifying that all parts of the creation are jointly participating in the birth pangs.

Here are some similar metaphorical uses of **sunodino** in secular Greek writings...

when [after the winter’s cold] the groaning earth gives birth in pain to what has been formed within her.
(Heraclit. Sto. c. 39 p. 58, 9)

all Sicily, filled with fire from Aetna, groaned [stenachai] over the loss of Persephone). (Diod. S. 5, 5, 1 quoting the tragic poet Carcinus)

Creation will one day be delivered—and the difference between then and now is the difference between agony and ecstasy! Think what will happen when nature is free to produce as it was designed to produce, free from pestilence and danger. We are going to see that day!

Question - [What does it mean that all creation groans \(Romans 8:22\)?](#)

Answer - If you’ve ever longed to be released from your earthly body to be free from sin and the physical suffering associated with it, then you know something of what Paul meant when he said, “All creation groans” in Romans 8:22.

To better understand the meaning of *all creation groans*, it helps to consider the context. In Romans 8, the apostle Paul is teaching believers that their new life in Jesus Christ is solidly founded on God’s promises and plans for His children. The first promise Paul

touches on is that of future glory: “I consider our present sufferings insignificant compared to the glory that will soon be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18, GW).

We may suffer now through our journey here on earth, but Paul reminds us that this world is not our home (1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13). Awaiting us is a glorious future kingdom where death is defeated, and tears of sorrow, pain, and grief will all be wiped away (Revelation 21:4). When we firmly lay hold of this promise from God, we can begin to view our current troubles as light and momentary compared to the far greater eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17).

In Romans 8:19, Paul says that all creation is eagerly awaiting that future glorious day when God’s children become who they were always meant to be. J. B. Phillips’ New Testament in Modern English renders verse 19 like this: “The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.”

Because of the fall of man, every part of God’s creation was subjected to a curse (Romans 8:20). Under that curse, all creation groans: the ground was cursed for Adam’s sake, thorns and thistles and noxious weeds began to grow, all of Eve’s daughters have labored painfully in childbirth, and death entered the world (Genesis 3:14–19).

In Romans 8:21, Paul explains that the entire universe, held under the curse, eagerly longs for the day when it will join with God’s children in glorious liberation from death and decay. Paul is speaking of the [new heavens and new earth](#) when “no longer will there be any curse” (Revelation 22:3). The curse of sin will be lifted, and all creation will be restored to the Eden-like reflection of God’s glory (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13). “‘There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

Right now the entire creation reflects the curse of sin. All creation “groans”; that is, all created things suffer a common misery, being in a state of pain and disorder. The “groaning” is intense, as Paul’s simile shows: “as in the pains of childbirth.” When at last sin is removed from the children of God, all of nature will burst forth in glory. The full work of redemption includes the reversal of the curse.

As part of creation, “we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us” (Romans 8:23NLT).

God promises a magnificent future for the believer, complete with a brand-new, glorified body. At present, we only have a taste of our glorious future, through the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. He is the down payment, or deposit, guaranteeing our full adoption as God’s children and the release of our bodies from sin and suffering (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30).

In the meantime, all creation groans—believers, along with the rest of the fallen universe, travail as a woman in childbirth, longing to be clothed in their heavenly bodies (2 Corinthians 5:2). Significantly, the pain of childbirth is not endured without the hope of new life. Paul, knowing that hope transforms suffering, gave believers this inspiring metaphor. Just as a woman labors through the agony of birth pangs with the hope of new life, all creation groans as it waits for the promise of full and final restoration and redemption. We may suffer now, but our heavenly reward is worth the wait. - [Gotquestions.org](#)

Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [ou monon de, alla kai autoi ten aparchen tou pneumatou echontes](#) (PAPMPN) [hemeis kai autoi en heautois stenazomen](#) (1PPAI) [huiouthesian apekdechomenoi](#), (PMPMPN) [ten apolutrosin tou somatou hemon](#).

Amplified: And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the firstfruits of the [Holy] Spirit [a foretaste of the blissful things to come] groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies [from sensuality and the grave, which will reveal] our adoption (our manifestation as God’s sons). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realised our full sonship in him. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: but we ourselves also who have the first-fruit of the Spirit, we ourselves also are groaning within

ourselves, assiduously and patiently waiting the full realization of our adult sonship at the time of the redemption of our body. For we were saved in the sphere of hope.

Young's Literal: And not only so, but also we ourselves, having the first-fruit of the Spirit, we also ourselves in ourselves do groan, adoption expecting -- the redemption of our body

AND NOT ONLY THIS, BUT ALSO WE OURSELVES HAVING THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT: ou monon de, alla kai autoi ten aparchen tou pneumatou echontes (PAPMPN):

- Ro 8:15,16; 5:5; 2Co 5:5; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 1:14; 5:9) (Ro 8:26; 7:24; 2Cor 5:2, 3, 4; 7:5; Php 1:21, 22, 23; 1Pe 1:7
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And not only this - not only is creation groaning

Having ([2192](#)) (**echo**) means holding or possessing with the **present tense** picturing the first fruits, the Spirit, as our continual possession. This is good news!

Of the Spirit - This phrase in Greek is referred to as an appositive genitive which in simple terms means that first fruits *is* the Holy Spirit, Who now indwells every believer (Ro 8:9-note; Ro 8:11-note) and Whose presence in us guarantees the full completion of our salvation -- future tense salvation (glorification) = the redemption of our dying decaying physical bodies which will be changed instantly into glorified bodies (1Co 15:42ff 1Th 4:13-note). The culmination of our position as adopted sons is the resurrection state. The **first fruits** is a pledge of more to come, specifically the redemption of our body.

First fruits ([536](#)) (**aparche** [**word study**] from **apó** = away from + **árchomai** = to begin) is the first fruit, which in Biblical terms describes an offering of any kind, animal as well as grain. It represents the first portion of offering set aside specifically for Lord. The first portion of the harvest was regarded both as a first installment and as a pledge of the final delivery of the whole.

Aparche - 9x in 9v in the NT - Rom 8:23; 11:16; 16:5; 1 Cor 15:20, 23; 16:15; 2 Thess 2:13; Jas 1:18; Rev 14:4. **NAS** = first convert(1), first fruits(6), first piece(1).

Aparche - 68x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)** - Exod 22:29; 23:19; 25:2f; 35:5; 36:6; 38:24; Lev 2:12; 22:12; 23:10; Num 5:9; 15:20f; 18:8, 11f, 29f, 32; 31:29; Deut 12:6, 11, 17; 18:4; 26:2, 10; 33:21; 1 Sam 2:29; 10:4; 2 Sam 1:21; 2 Chr 31:5, 10, 12, 14; Ezra 8:25; Neh 10:37, 39; 12:44; 13:5; Ps 78:51; 105:36; Ezek 20:31, 40; 44:30; 45:1, 6f, 13, 16; 48:8ff, 12, 18, 20f; Mal 3:8

First fruits is related to the Jewish term that refers to that which is set apart to God before remainder could be used. Under the Law Israel was to bring the **first fruits** of the grain to the LORD and in this act they were acknowledging that all produce was God's. The **first fruits** of a harvest of grain was an indication of a greater harvest to come.

Paul utilizes the metaphor of **first fruits** in three ways in the NT:

- (1) Of the relationship between the resurrection of Christ to the resurrection of the dead (1Cor 15:20, 23). Christ's resurrection is the "**first fruit** of those who have fallen asleep" (1Cor 15:20), and like the **first fruits** of the harvest, it is a taste and a guarantee of the full harvest of resurrection yet to come.
- (2) Likewise the Holy Spirit is called **first fruit** in (see **note** Ro 8:23) (cf. Holy Spirit as "downpayment" in 2Cor 1:22 5:5, Ep 1:14-note), a foretaste of our divine life in the age to come.
- (3) Finally when Paul speaks of his first converts in a region, he calls them the **"first fruits"** (cf "first fruits of Achaia" in 1Cor 16:15). Epaphroditus ("praised") was the first convert (and predictive of a greater harvest to follow) from Asia who became part of Paul's "offering of the Gentiles" to the Lord (Ro 15:16-note).

Just as the nation of Israel tasted the first fruits of Canaan when the spies returned (Nu 13:23, 24, 25, 26, 27), so we Christians have tasted of the blessings of heaven through the ministry of the Spirit. This makes us want to see the Lord, receive a new body, and live with Him and serve Him forever. We are waiting for "the adoption," which is the redemption of the body when Christ returns (Php 3:20,21-note). This is the thrilling climax to "the adoption" that took place at conversion when "the Spirit of adoption" gave us an adult standing in God's family. When Christ returns, we shall enter into our full inheritance.

The first portion of the harvest was regarded both as a first installment and as a pledge of the final delivery of the whole. The concept of first fruits is prominent in the OT, where, according to the law, Israelites were expected to bring the first-ripe elements of grain, fruit, etc., to the Lord as an offering (Ex 23:19 Neh 10:35). By this observance of worship the offerer acknowledged that all

produce was the provision of God and was really his. Implicit also in the ritual was the assurance from the divine side that the general harvest to be enjoyed by the offerer would providentially follow. From the human side this act of obedience was a manifestation of FAITH in the promise of Jehovah to provide what they needed.

When we experience the Holy Spirit's empowering us to turn from iniquity and to truly worship, serve, obey and love God, we have a taste of the future completed and perfected renewal He will work in us at the resurrection. Every time we see Him working His righteousness in and through us, we yearn all the more to be freed of our remaining sin and spiritual weakness. Because of our divinely-bestowed sensitivity to sin, we ourselves groan within ourselves over the dreadful curse of sin that is still manifested by our remaining humanness.

First fruits was the actual beginning, the first installment, of the Palestinian harvest (Ex 23:19 Lev 23:10,11; Dt 18:4 26:1, 2, 3, 4); the presence of the Spirit in believers is thus the actual beginning of the future world. Believers had experienced redemption (Ro 3:24-note) and adoption (Ro 8:15-note), but still awaited the fullness of that experience at the resurrection of their bodies by the Spirit (Ro 8:11-note). The first converts to Christ in a particular area were called "firstfruits" (Ro 16:15-note 1Co 16:15). Christ himself is the firstfruits in reference to the resurrection (1Cor 15:20, 23).

To say that we have the first fruits of the Spirit means that even though we do not yet have our complete inheritance as God's children, we have already received a significant portion of it in terms of the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, along with all He has already accomplished for us in regeneration and sanctification. This is the sense in which the Spirit is the "earnest of our inheritance" (Ep 1:13-note), i.e., the down payment, the first installment, the deposit, the pledge of the fullness of glory (2Cor 1:22 5:5). In this sense the "firstfruits" are not simply the beginning of the harvest, but are also the guarantee that much more will follow. And as this context shows, the complete inheritance includes the redemption of our bodies and a liberated, glorified universe.

When Abraham's servant was sent to find a bride for Isaac and met Rebekah, he gave silver and gold garments and presents to Laban as indications of what was to come. That is what God has done for us by his Holy Spirit. That indescribable peace we knew when we first experienced the forgiveness of our sins, the power of God that calms our heart despite circumstances, the joy that floods our souls—these are mere foretastes of what is yet to come!

EVEN WE OURSELVES GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES: hemeis kai autoi en heautois stenazomen (1PPAI):

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Spurgeon comments that "That is our state now; at least, it is the condition of the most of us. Some of our brethren have gone ahead so tremendously that they have passed out of the world of groaning altogether; they are perfect. I regret that they are not in heaven; it would seem to be a much more proper place for them than this imperfect earth is (**Ed**: I'm not sure if Spurgeon is being sarcastic or not in this comment!). But as for us, our experience leads us, in sympathy with the apostle, to say that we are groaning after something better. We have not received it yet; we have the beginnings of it, we have the earnest of it, we have the sure pledge of it; but it is not as yet our portion to enjoy; we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" for, though the soul be horn again, the body is not. "The body in dead," says the apostle, in the tenth verse of this chapter, "because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." There is a wonderful process through which this body shall yet pass, and then it shall be raised again, a glorious body, fitted for our regenerated spirit; but as yet it remains unregenerate."

Groan (4727) (**stenazo** from **stenos** = narrow or contracted as when one is squeezed or pressed by circumstances) literally describes an internal squeezing and denotes a feeling of sorrow which is internal. It means to sigh or groan either inwardly to ourselves or outwardly because of undesirable circumstances or oppression under which the individual suffers. Stenazo means to express grief by inarticulate or semi-articulate sounds. A groan is an audible expression of anguish due to physical, emotional, or spiritual pain.

Hiebert (in comments on use of stenazo in James 5:9+) says "Whereas the primary reference is to the inner feeling of dissatisfaction and personal irritation at another, rather than the expression of loud and bitter complaints, it involves a feeling of criticism and faultfinding directed against others. This personal feeling reflects itself in smoldering resentment that may display itself in an antagonistic expression of bitter groans."

Stenazo refers to the utterances of a person who is caught in a dreadful situation and has no immediate prospect of deliverance. The term is used in its noun form (stenagmos - used in Romans 8:26-note of Spirit's prayers expressed to God inarticulately) by Luke to describe the desperate utterances of the Israelites during their oppressive bondage in Egypt

'I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT, AND HAVE HEARD THEIR

GROANS, AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM; COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT.' (Acts 7:34+ cp Ex 2:24, 25)

In the present context these **continual** (stenazo = present tense) **groanings** bewail a condition that is painful, unsatisfying, and sorrowful and are a cry for deliverance from a torturing experience. The pain we feel now because we still live in bodies that harbor the flesh (the old sin nature) which causes us to we still stumble and grieve the Holy Spirit. In this passage, the deep distress is related primarily to our remaining sinfulness. This is especially painful to those who know that they have been shown great mercy and have manifold grace to live victoriously for His glory.

Below are the other 5 uses of **stenazo** in the NT.

Paul explains this groaning to the Corinthians writing that...

1 we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For indeed in this house we **groan** (stenazo), longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. 4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we **groan** (stenazo), being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. (1 Cor 5:1-5)

Comment: As long as we are in the "tent" of our human body, which harbors the old flesh nature, we will not fully escape sin's corruption this side of eternity. This truth causes Christians to suffer times of deep inner distress over the debilitating sinfulness that still clings to them.

When they brought the deaf to Jesus He put His fingers into His ears and after spitting touched His tongue...

and looking up to heaven with a **deep sigh** (stenazo), He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" (Mark 7:34+)

The **writer of Hebrews** charged his readers to...

Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not **with grief** (stenazo), for this would be unprofitable for you. (Heb 13:17+)

In James stenazo takes on a slightly different sense, James commanding...

Do not complain (stenazo), brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. (James 5:9+)

Stenazo - 19x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)**, mainly in the Major Prophets - Job 9:27; 18:20; 24:12; 30:25; 31:38; Isa. 19:8; 21:2; 24:7; 30:15; 46:8; 59:10; Jer. 31:19; Lam. 1:8, 21; Ezek. 21:6f; 26:15f; Nah. 3:7. Below is an example in which Jerusalem is personified as a woman groaning because of her sinfulness...

Lamentations 1:8 Jerusalem sinned greatly, Therefore she has become an unclean thing. All who honored her despise her Because they have seen her nakedness; Even she herself **groans** (Hebrew = 'anach = groan in pain or grief; Lxx = stenazo) and turns away.

WAITING EAGERLY FOR... ADOPTION AS SONS : huiiothesian apekdechomenoi (PMPMPN) :

- Ro 8:19,25; Luke 20:36; Php 3:20,21; 2Ti 4:8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1Jn 3:2
- [Romans 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The reason we can groan and yet do so with an eager expectation is because we have experienced **the firstfruits of the Spirit** a foretaste of the incomparable glory to come.

The **Spirit** is the **firstfruits** of heaven. And since we have the Spirit now, we know a little of what heaven will be like and are assured of our final destiny. God's gift of the Spirit to the church is an event in the present which foreshadows the future union of God and His people in eternity.

Waiting eagerly (553) (**apekdechomai** [word study] from **apó** = intensifier [see Vincent below] + **ekdéchomai** = expect, look for <> from **ek** = out + **déchomai** = receive kindly, accept deliberately and readily) means waiting in great anticipation but with patience

(compare our English expression "wait it out"). To expect fully. To look (wait) for assiduously (marked by careful unremitting attention) and patiently.

Kenneth Wuest explains that **apekdechomai** is "a Greek word made up of three words put together, the word, **'to receive,'** (**dechomai**) which speaks of a welcoming or appropriating reception such as is tendered to a friend who comes to visit one; the word "off," (**apo**) speaking here of the withdrawal of one's attention from other objects, and the word "out," (**ek**) used here in a perfective sense which intensifies the already existing meaning of the word. The composite word speaks of an attitude of intense yearning and eager waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus into the air to take His Bride to heaven with Him, the attention being withdrawn from all else and concentrated upon the Lord Jesus."

Apekdechomai is in the **present tense** indicating this is a heavenly citizen's continual mindset (Do you frequently contemplate His return beloved?) and the **middle voice** which indicates the subject is the beneficiary of the waiting. Wuest picks up on this nuance of the middle voice with the translation "**eagerly waiting to welcome** the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **and to receive Him to ourselves**" where "to ourselves" is the reflexive aspect of the middle voice. What a beautiful picture of the Bride, His Church, waiting to receive Him to herself! A waiting, welcoming mindset will motivate the bride to keep herself pure and holy.

Marvin Vincent writes that ""the compounded preposition **apo** denotes the withdrawal of attention from inferior objects. The word is habitually used in the New Testament with reference to a future manifestation of the glory of Christ or of His people." (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament Vol. 3, Page 1-453)

A T Robertson adds that **apekdechomai** is a "Rare and late double compound (perfective use of prepositions like wait out) which vividly pictures Paul's eagerness for the second coming of Christ as the normal attitude of the Christian colonist whose home is heaven." (Robertson, A. Word Pictures in the New Testament)

Apekdechomai pictures waiting in great anticipation but with patience. Awaiting eagerly and expectantly for some future event and so to look forward eagerly. Note that seven of the eight NT uses of **apekdechomai** are related in some way to our "**blessed hope**", the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Adoption as sons (5206) (**huiothesia** [word study] from **huios** = son + **tithemi** = place) literally means "to place one as a son". **Huiothesia** thus speaks of adoption or being placed in a position and rights as one's own child. It means to formally and legally declare that someone who is not one's own child is henceforth to be treated and cared for as one's own child, including complete rights of inheritance.

Huiothesia is used only by Paul and is not found in classical writings, but it describes a Roman legal term by which a person takes into his family a child not his own, with the purpose of treating him as a full son and giving him all the privileges of an own son. The custom was not common among the Jews, but was among the Greeks and Romans, with whom an adopted child was legally entitled to all rights and privileges of a natural-born child. This custom is used as an illustration of the act of God giving a believing sinner, who is not His natural child, a position as a fully grown son in His family.

Detzler writes that "Throughout the Greek world the wealthy and influential practiced adoption. Sometimes just a simple declaration in the marketplace turned a slave into a son. It was an ancient remedy used when a marriage failed to produce a male heir. No change in name came, but the adopted son immediately became heir to the entire wealth and position of his adoptive family. Conversely the adopted son also assumed responsibility for the parents in their time of need. Adoption in the Greek and Roman world was a beautiful picture. His contemporary culture gave the Apostle Paul this word, but he gave the word a new, Holy Spirit-inspired meaning. (Only Paul uses this word to describe the relationship of believers to their Heavenly Father.) No concept is more meaningful to a believer. For adoption deposits every-thing that God owns to the accounts of His sons and daughters. Adoption is all about position and privilege... Walking down the dusty streets of Nazareth one summer afternoon I was almost run over by a racing boy. As he charged past me the little lad caught sight of his father. In a shrill, childish voice he screamed: "**Abba, Abba.**" Then I began to understand the intimacy of relationship which God sustains to us. What wonderful, God-ordained words to use in prayer: "Abba, Father." ([Detzler, Wayne E: New Testament Words in Today's Language. Victor. 1986](#)) (Bolding added)

The concept of **adoption as sons** reaches back into the Old Testament, Paul writing in Romans that

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren (the Jews), my kinsmen according to the flesh (specifically unbelieving Jews), who are Israelites, to whom belongs the **adoption as sons** (**huiothesia**) and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (see **notes** Romans 9:3; 9:4; 9:5) (**Comment:** God had "adopted" Israel in the Old Testament, Jehovah declaring in Exodus 4:22 to Moses "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is My **son**, my first-born.'")

Earlier in **Romans 8** Paul explains the **present tense** aspect of **adoption as sons** when we were born into God's family and God gave us His Spirit Who kindles the fire of assurance in our souls for...

all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**. For you have not received a spirit of slavery (as when we were bound to sin and our "father" Satan) leading to fear again, but you have received (right now in this life) a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "Abba! (Daddy) Father!" (Ro 8:14, 15-note)

Comment: Abba is the very name the Beloved Son used when speaking to His Father, Mark 14:36 recording "And He [Jesus] was saying "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

William Barclay further explains that...

Roman adoption was always rendered more serious and more difficult by the Roman patria potestas. This was the father's power over his family; it was the power of absolute disposal and control, and in the early days was actually the power of life and death. In regard to his father, a Roman son never came of age. No matter how old he was, he was still under the patria potestas, in the absolute possession and under the absolute control, of his father. Obviously this made adoption into another family a very difficult and serious step. In adoption a person had to pass from one patria potestas to another. There were two steps.

The first was known as mancipatio, and was carried out by a symbolic sale, in which copper and scales were symbolically used. Three times the symbolism of sale was carried out. Twice the father symbolically sold his son, and twice he bought him back; but the third time he did not buy him back and thus the patria potestas was held to be broken.

There followed a ceremony called vindictio. The adopting father went to the praetor, one of the Roman magistrates, and presented a legal case for the transference of the person to be adopted into his patria potestas. When all this was completed, the adoption was complete. Clearly this was a serious and an impressive step. **But it is the consequences of adoption which are most significant for the picture that is in Paul's mind.** There were four main ones.

- (i) The adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family. In the most binding legal way, he got a new father.
- (ii) It followed that he became heir to his new father's estate. Even if other sons were afterwards born, it did not affect his rights. He was inalienably co-heir with them.
- (iii) In law, the old life of the adopted person was completely wiped out; for instance, all debts were cancelled. He was regarded as a new person entering into a new life with which the past had nothing to do.
- (iv) In the eyes of the law he was absolutely the son of his new father. Roman history provides an outstanding case of how completely this was held to be true.

The Emperor Claudius adopted Nero in order that he might succeed him on the throne; they were not in any sense blood relations. Claudius already had a daughter, Octavia. To cement the alliance Nero wished to marry her. Nero and Octavia were in no sense blood relations; yet, in the eyes of the law, they were brother and sister; and before they could marry, the Roman senate had to pass special legislation." ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible](#))

Our **adoption** began in eternity past with God's choice when...

He predestined us to adoption as **sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will" (see note Ephesians 1:5)

Then we actually became His children at salvation

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12)

But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption as sons**. And because you are **sons**, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a **son**; and if a **son**, then an **heir** through God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

Our sonship will culminate with our glorification, the full realization of our inheritance...

Whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also **glorified**. (Ro 8:30).

As believers and sons and daughters of God we have already been placed in the family of God, and are being led by and controlled by the Spirit. But only when our mortal bodies have been glorified, and we are made like Him, will we possess all the fullness of sonship. And so we groan for that glorious day.

THOUGHT - Have you pondered this truth recently? This glorious truth will impact your temporal outlook beloved. Take time right now to meditate on your future glorification.

Question - [What does it mean that Christians are adopted by God?](#)

Answer - To adopt someone is to make that person a legal son or daughter. Adoption is one of the metaphors used in the Bible to explain how Christians are brought into the family of God. Jesus came "that we might receive adoption to sonship" (Galatians 4:5), and He was successful: "You received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children" (Romans 8:15NLT).

The Bible also uses the metaphor of being "[born again](#)" into God's family (John 3:3), which seems to be at odds with the concept of adoption because, normally, either a person is born into a family or adopted, not both. We shouldn't make too much of the difference, however, because both of these concepts are metaphors and should not be played against each other.

Adoption was not common in the Jewish world. A person's standing was based on his birth. This is the reason that, if a man died, his brother was supposed to marry the widow. The first son to be born of the new marriage would be legally considered the son of the dead brother so that his family line would continue. There was never any thought of the widow adopting a son to carry on the family name. In John 3, Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, a Jewish leader, and He uses the Jewish concept of being born again (or born from above) to explain how one is brought into God's family.

In the Roman world, adoption was a significant and common practice. Today, we can write a will and leave our wealth and property to anyone we want, male or female. In the Roman world, with few exceptions, a man had to pass his wealth on to his son(s). If a man had no sons or if he felt that his sons were incapable of managing his wealth or were unworthy of it, he would have to adopt someone who would make a worthy son. These adoptions were not infant adoptions as is common today. Older boys and adult men were normally adopted. In some cases, the adoptee might even be older than the man who was adopting him. When the adoption was legally approved, the adoptee would have all his debts cancelled and he would receive a new name. He would be the legal son of his adoptive father and entitled to all the rights and benefits of a son. A father could disown his natural-born son, but an adoption was irreversible.

In the book [Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ](#) and the movie starring Charlton Heston, we see a vivid portrayal of Roman adoption. In the movie, Judah [Ben-Hur](#) (a Jew) has been imprisoned on a Roman galley ship as a rower. When the ship sinks in battle, Judah escapes and saves the life of a Roman commander, Arrius. Arrius's only son has been killed, and he ultimately adopts Judah, who is pardoned for his supposed crimes. He is also given a new name, "young Arrius," and has all the rights of inheritance. In the scene where the adoption is announced, Arrius takes off his ancestral signet ring and gives it to young Arrius. Young Arrius says that he has received "a new life, a new home, a new father."

Paul, writing to Roman audiences, uses the metaphor of adoption, which a Roman audience would have understood. Galatians 4:3–7 says, "So also, when we were children, we were enslaved under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law, that we might receive our adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, '[Abba, Father!](#)' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, you are also an heir through God." In this passage, Christians are born enslaved, but Jesus buys them out of slavery and they are adopted by the Father and given the Spirit, so now they are heirs.

When we come to faith in Christ, our debts are cancelled, we are given a new name, and we are given all the rights that heirs of God possess. One difference from Roman adoption is that Christians are not adopted because God thinks they will make worthy heirs. God adopts people who are completely unworthy, because He adopts on the basis of His grace.

So, Christians have been born into God's family (using a Jewish metaphor) and adopted into God's family (using a Roman metaphor). The end result is the same; Christians are forever part of God's family. [GotQuestions.org](#)

- Luke 21:28; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30
- [Romans 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

We have been redeemed and we will be redeemed! **Glory!**

Jesus alluded to this **future redemption** when He declared...

But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your **redemption** is drawing near. (Luke 21:28+)

Comment: When all the signs given in the Olivet discourse are just beginning to be fulfilled, then Christ says His coming is very near. Although we cannot know the date, we can be sure that He is coming very soon.

Paul speaks elsewhere of this **future redemption**...

(The Holy Spirit) Who is given as a pledge (**arrabon**) of our inheritance, with a view to the **redemption** of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:14+)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed (sphragizo) for the day of **redemption**. (Eph 4:30+)

Redemption (629) (**apolutrosis** from **apo** = marker of dissociation or separation + **lutron** = ransom) (Click word study on apolutrosis or see How to do Greek Word Study which uses **apolutrosis** as the example to study).

Apolutrosis describes the payment of a price to ransom, buy back and deliver from a situation from which one is powerless to liberate himself or from a penalty which he himself could never have paid. Apolutrosis was used in Greek writings describing liberation of prisoners of war, slaves and those under penalty of death.

Apolutrosis pictures the recalling of captives (sinners) from captivity (these bodies of sin) through the payment of a ransom (lutron).

Our spirit and soul have been redeemed (Eph 1:7-note), and our body will be redeemed. This is glorification or **future tense salvation** (See **Three Tenses of Salvation**) which will be revealed in the last time when we are freed even from the **presence** of SIN and the **pleasure** of SIN. Because we as believers are already new creatures possessing the divine nature, our souls are fit for heaven and eternal glory. We love God, hate sin, and have holy longings for obedience to the Word. But while on earth we are kept in bondage by our mortal bodies, which are still corrupted by SIN and the FLESH (both of which are still present in our decaying bodies).

Ray Stedman illustrates Romans 8:23, 24 with this story: The other day I gave my oldest daughter a driving lesson, and she wanted to start driving the Oldsmobile because it has an automatic shift. But I said to her, "No, dear, I think it would be better if you would start with the Chevrolet. It has a stick shift, and a clutch, and it is a little bit cranky and hard to operate at times, but if you will learn how to run this car, you'll have no trouble at all with the Oldsmobile." You know, in a sense, God has done that with us: He has given us these old, cranky, balky, pain ridden bodies of ours, and has told us that, if we learn how to handle these, if we will learn how to make these obey, and present these to him as a living sacrifice, then we will grow ready in spirit to receive those glorious bodies that are now being prepared for us. And Paul says that, with this hope before us, we can patiently wait for God to teach all that we need to know. ([Romans 8:14-25 The Joy of Being Grown Up](#))

QUESTION - [What is the meaning of Christian redemption?](#)

ANSWER - Everyone is in need of redemption. Our natural condition was characterized by guilt: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Christ's redemption has freed us from guilt, being "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

The benefits of redemption include eternal life (Revelation 5:9-10), forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7), righteousness (Romans 5:17), freedom from the law's curse (Galatians 3:13), adoption into God's family (Galatians 4:5), deliverance from sin's bondage (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:14-18), peace with God (Colossians 1:18-20), and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). To be redeemed, then, is to be forgiven, holy, justified, free, adopted, and reconciled. See also Psalm 130:7-8; Luke 2:38; and Acts 20:28.

The word redeem means "to buy out." The term was used specifically in reference to the purchase of a slave's freedom. The application of this term to Christ's death on the cross is quite telling. If we are "redeemed," then our prior condition was one of slavery. God has purchased our freedom, and we are no longer in bondage to sin or to the Old Testament law. This metaphorical

use of “redemption” is the teaching of Galatians 3:13 and 4:5.

Related to the Christian concept of redemption is the word *ransom*. Jesus paid the price for our release from sin and its punishment (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6). His death was in exchange for our life. In fact, Scripture is quite clear that redemption is only possible “through His blood,” that is, by His death (Colossians 1:14).

The streets of heaven will be filled with former captives who, through no merit of their own, find themselves redeemed, forgiven, and free. Slaves to sin have become saints. No wonder we will sing a new song—a song of praise to the Redeemer who was slain (Revelation 5:9). We were slaves to sin, condemned to eternal separation from God. Jesus paid the price to redeem us, resulting in our freedom from slavery to sin and our rescue from the eternal consequences of that sin. GotQuestions.org

Related Resources:

- [What is alienation? What does it mean that we are alienated from God?](#)
- [What is Christian reconciliation? Why do we need to be reconciled with God?](#)
- [How and to whom did Jesus pay our ransom?](#)
- [Why was the redemption price for men and women different in Leviticus 27:3–8?](#)
- [What is a kinsman redeemer?](#)

F B Meyer writes that...

The saints have been purchased at great cost by the precious blood of the Son of God. Not only their spirits, but their bodies, have been bought with an infinite expenditure. Is it not a wonderful thought that God should have thought it worth His while to expend so much on us! But, since He has done it, we cannot suppose that He will not make all He can of us! He will bring His estate under cultivation; there will be no corner of it that will not yield Him produce.

To be redeemed.--Our bodies are owned by God, but they are not yet entirely redeemed. And if we should die before the Lord's advent, they will return to their mother earth, possessed but not redeemed. Hence the apostle says that we are waiting for our adoption--to wit, the redemption of our body (Ro 8:23). We are under the sentence of corruption for Adam's sin; but we are to be redeemed.

Sealed.--In Ezekiel's day a mark was set on the foreheads of the men that sighed and cried for sin (Ezek. 9:4); and in the Apocalypse we read of the sealing of God's servants (Rev 7:2, 3). For sealing there are needed the softened wax; the imprint of the beloved face; the steady pressure. Would that the Spirit might impress the face of our dear Lord on our softened hearts, that they may keep it forevermore!

This sealing is an earnest of our inheritance. The eternal future is all unknown, yet we may guess at it, because the work of the Spirit within us is the first-fruits--the grapes of Eshcol, showing what the vintage will be; 'the earnest penny, which is the pledge as well as part of the entire payment; the first streak of the coming day. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Homily)

In his book **No Condemnation in Christ Jesus**, **Octavius Winslow** has the following chapter...

The First-fruits of the Spirit, a Pledge Of the Full Redemption

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Ro 8:23

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. Ro 8:23

And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us. Romans 8:23

From his natural and impressive digression, the Apostle again returns to the renewed creature of whom he had previously been speaking. Having adverted to the suffering of the whole animate creation, he proceeds to show that this condition was not peculiar or solitary- that not only in the heart of the irrational creature, but even in the heart of the renewed Christian there were the intense throbings of a woe, and the deep groanings of a burden, from which it sighed and hoped to be delivered. Let us take each section

in its order, of this remarkable passage.

"Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit." It had been the earnest aim of the Apostle broadly and distinctly to draw the great line of demarcation between the state of nature and the state of grace. What distinctive feature more illustrative of the Christian character could he have selected than this. "Who have the first-fruits of the Spirit." The figurative allusion is to a familiar law of the Jewish economy. It will be recollected that, under the Levitical dispensation, the Lord commanded that the first-fruits, in the form of a single sheaf, should be sickled, and waved before him by the priest; and that this wave-offering was to be considered as constituting the herald or the pledge of a ripened and full harvest. And not only should it be an earnest and a pledge, but it should represent the nature and character of the fruit which, before long, in luxuriant abundance would crowd with its golden sheaves, and amid shouts of gladness, the swelling garner. When, therefore, it is said that believers in Jesus have the "first-fruits of the Spirit," the meaning clearly is, that they have such communications of the Spirit now, as are a pledge and foretaste of what they shall possess and enjoy in the great day of the coming glory. "In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." We remark, in general terms, that if we are believers, then we are partakers of that grace which is the earnest of glory. Do we partake of the grace of life? It is the same life which beats in the souls of the glorified. In us its pulsations are faint and fluctuating; in them they are deep and unfluttering- yet the life is the same. And if we have the Spirit of life dwelling in us now, then have we the first-fruits of the life which is to come. Have we the Spirit of adoption? What is it but the earnest and the seal of our certain reception into our Father's house? The love to God which overflows our hearts, the yearnings of those hearts to be at home, are the first-fruits of our consummated and glorified sonship. Thus might we travel the entire circle of the Christian graces which go to form, sanctify, and adorn the Christian character, illustrating the truth, that each grace wrought by the Spirit in the heart on earth is the germ of glory in heaven, and that the perfection of glory will be the perfection of each grace. The present character and tutelage of the child of God are preparatory to a higher state of being- yes, it is an essential part of that being itself. Oh, it is a holy and inspiring thought, that every development of grace, and every aspiration of holiness, and every victory of faith, and every achievement of prayer, and every gleam of joy in the soul here below, is the earnest-sheaf of the golden ears of happiness and glory garnered for the saints on high. "He that goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

"Even we ourselves groan within ourselves." In these words the expectant of glory is represented as sympathizing, in a certain degree, with the general condition of present misery, and expectation of future good. But we must distinguish the emotion here described, from the somewhat kindred depression beneath which the whole creation is bowed. It is the groaning of those who have the "first-fruits of the Spirit"- consequently it is the emotion of a living soul. In the one case, the groaning is the throb and the throe of death; in the other case it is the evidence and the breathing of life.

To what causes may it be traced? We groan within ourselves on account of sin- its innate principle, and its practical outbreakings. Over what do our tears flow the bitterest and the fastest? The winged riches? The heart's treasure wrenched from our grasp by ruthless death, and which the cruel grave has hid from our view? Ah, no! but the sin which lays us in penitence and grief at the Savior's feet, with David's confession and prayer breathing from our lips- "Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight." Oh, what a mercy to know that the "sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: that a broken and contrite heart he will not despise!"

There is also the groaning arising from external trial. Of this cup, which all alike drink, none quaff so deeply as those to whom are imparted the "first-fruits of the Spirit." The path of sorrow is the path to glory, and the "bread and the water of affliction" is the food of all the "prisoners of hope." But spring from what cause it may, this groaning of the servants of God confirms the affecting truth, that the believer possesses but the "first-fruits of the Spirit;" and that, consequently, his present condition, being one of but partial sanctification, must of necessity be one of but limited happiness. And yet we would not fail to remind the reader of the truth, that the deeper his sanctification the keener will be his sense of indwelling corruption, and the heavier his groaning because of it. So that, so long as he is still the tenant of a tabernacle of sin and death- an unwilling subject of vanity- and so long as he grows in grace, he will "groan being burdened," and will the more deeply sigh, and the more intensely long for the uncaging of his spirit, that frees him entirely forever from its oppressiveness and its thralldom.

But, oh, there is music in the groaning of those who have the "first-fruits of the Spirit!" The chain they wear is not the manacle of a slave of sin, shaking his galling fetters in deep and dark despair. The captivity that confines him, is not the subjection of a voluntary vassal of Satan, crouching beneath the burden, and trembling at the lash of a hard task master. Oh, no! it is the sensibility, the consciousness, the groaning of the Christian. It tells of the Spirit's indwelling. It betokens the hope of glory. Those inward heavings of the soul are the pantings of a life divine; those deep groanings of the heart are the muffled chimings of heaven. They are the indices of a nature which God will before long lift to its native home; they are the discordant notes of an anthem, which soon will fill heaven with its swelling and entrancing music.

"Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The terms "adoption," "redemption," must here be taken in a restricted sense. Our present adoption into God's family is as perfect as God can make it. We shall not in reality be more the children of God in

heaven than we are now. Dwell upon this truth, beloved. Press it in faith and gladness to your sighing, groaning heart. Is God's hand uplifted? Oh, tremble not! It is a Father's hand. Say not that it presses heavily upon you- it is the pressure of love. Oh, think not that there is one throb of affection less towards you in his heart. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," and all the immunities and blessings of a present sonship are ours. Equally as complete is our redemption from all that can condemn. When Jesus exclaimed, "It is finished!" by one offering he perfected forever the salvation of his church. Then did he entirely roll away the curse from his people. Then did he hurl their sins into an infinite depth. Then did he complete the work the Father gave him to do. For the finishing of that work, thanks be to God, the saints do not "wait"!

And still, all believers are the expectants of an "adoption" to be confirmed, and of a "redemption" to be perfected. Their adoption now is concealed, their adoption then will be visible. Their present adoption is limited in its privileges- their future adoption will introduce them to all the riches of their inheritance and to all the splendors of their Father's house. For this unveiled, this manifest, this full adoption they are "waiting." And so, too, of "redemption." The ransom price is paid, but the body is not yet fully redeemed. It still is fettered, and cribbed, and cabined by a thousand clinging corruptions and infirmities. But the day of its complete redemption draws near. In virtue of its ransom it will spring from the dust, its last link of corruption entirely and forever dissolved. "But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own." Php 3:20, 21. Like unto Christ's glorious body! Oh, then, no deformity will mar its symmetry! no infirmity will impair its strength! no sickness, no faintings, no nervousness, no pangs of suffering or throes of death will ever assail and torment it more! For this "redemption of the body" the sons of God are waiting. Our heavenly Father has adopted it. Our divine Savior has redeemed it. The Holy Spirit, our Comforter, has sealed it. Oh, yes! The first-fruits of the "first resurrection" bloom on the grave of the holy dead. Plant not above their heads the flowers that fade. There are flowers blooming there, plucked from the amaranthine bowers of immortality, and they will never die.

This page may arrest the eye of a sufferer, not soothed in his grief, or cheered in his loneliness by such prospects as these. There is coming a day when the irrational creation, of whom we have been speaking, will suffer no more. "The spirit of a beast goes downwards." But no such annihilation awaits suffering man. Oh, melancholy condition! Oh, dreary prospect! Suffering in this life, and suffering in the life to come! to pass from a fire that is temporary, to a fire that is eternal- from the agonies and throes of the first death, to the power and the pangs of the second! But there still is hope. Jesus died for sinners, and there is mercy even for the chief. Blessed suffering, hallowed sorrow, if now, in the agony of your grief, you are led to the Savior to learn, what in the sunny hour of prosperity and gladness you refused to learn- that God only can make you happy, and that God in Christ is prepared to make you happy. Oh, heaven-sent affliction! sweet messenger of love! beautiful in your somber robes, bearing to my soul a blessing so divine, so precious as this!

Have you the "first-fruits of the Spirit?" Guard them with tender, sleepless care. Nature in her richest domain yields no such fruits or flowers as these. Employ all the means and appliances within your reach to keep verdant and fruitful the sacred garden of your soul. Unveil it to the sun's light, to the gentle showers, and the soft gales of heaven. Let your incessant prayer be, "Awake, O north wind; and come, you south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

Oh, guard those precious "first-fruits!" Soon the glory they foreshadow will be revealed. The autumnal tints are deepening, the golden ears are ripening, the reaper's sickle is preparing, and before long we shall join in the song of the angels' harvest-home, "Grace, grace unto it!" (From **Octavius Winslow. No Condemnation in Christ Jesus**)

Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God - June 15

"Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit." Romans 8:23

THE figurative allusion is to a familiar law of the Jewish economy. It will be recollected that, under the Levitical dispensation, the Lord commanded that the first-fruits, in the form of a single sheaf, should be sickled and waved before him by the priest; and that this wave-offering was to be considered as constituting the herald, or the pledge, of the ripened and full harvest. And not only should it be an earnest and a pledge, but it should represent the nature and character of the fruit which, before long, in luxuriant abundance, would crowd with its golden sheaves, amid shouts of gladness, the swelling garner. When, therefore, it is said that believers in Jesus have the "first-fruits of the Spirit," the meaning clearly is, that they have such communications of the Spirit now, as are a pledge and foretaste of what they shall possess and enjoy in the great day of the coming glory. "In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

We remark, in general terms, that if we are believers, then are we partakers of that grace which is the earnest of glory. Do we partake of the grace of life? It is the same life which beats in the souls of the glorified. In us its pulsations are faint and fluctuating; in them they are deep and constant—yet the life is the same. And if we

have the spirit of life dwelling in us now, then have we the first-fruits of the life which is to come. Have we the spirit of adoption? What is it but the earnest and the seal of our certain reception into our Father's house? The love to God which overflows our hearts, the yearnings of those hearts to be at home, are the first-fruits of our consummated and glorified sonship. Thus might we travel the entire circle of the Christian graces, which form, sanctify, and adorn the Christian character; illustrating the truth, that each grace wrought by the Spirit in the heart, on earth, is the germ of glory in heaven, and that the perfection of glory will be the perfection of each grace. The present character and tutelage of the child of God are preparatory to a higher state of being—yes, they are essential parts of that being itself. Oh, it is a holy and inspiring thought, that every development of grace, and every aspiration of holiness, every victory of faith, every achievement of prayer, and every gleam of joy in the soul here below, is the earnest-sheaf of the golden ears of happiness and glory garnered for the saints on high. "He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Have yore the "first-fruits of the Spirit"? Guard them with tender, sleepless care. Nature, in her richest domain, yields no such fruits or flowers as these. Employ all the means and appliances within your reach, to keep verdant and fruitful the sacred garden of your soul. Unveil it to the sun's light, the gentle showers, and the soft gales of heaven. Let your incessant prayer be, "Awake, O north wind; and come, you south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." Oh, guard those precious "first-fruits"! Soon the glory they foreshadow will be revealed. The autumnal tints are deepening, the golden ears are ripening, the reaper's sickle is preparing, and before long we shall join in the song of the angels' harvest-home, "Grace, grace unto it!" (**Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God**)

AUGUST 3.

"We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons,
the redemption of our bodies." Romans 8:23

The terms "adoption," "redemption," must here be taken in a restricted sense. Our present adoption into God's family is as perfect as God can make it. We shall not in reality be more the children of God in heaven than we are now. Dwell upon this truth, beloved; press it in faith and gladness to your sighing, groaning heart. Is God's hand uplifted? Oh, tremble not! It is a Father's hand. Say not that it presses heavily upon you— it is the pressure of love. Do not think that there is one throb of affection less towards you in His heart. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," and all the immunities and blessings of a present sonship are ours.

Equally as complete is our redemption from all that can condemn. When Jesus exclaimed, "It is finished!" by one offering He perfected forever the salvation of His Church. Then did He entirely roll away the curse from His people. Then did He hurl their sins into an infinite depth. Then did He complete the work the Father gave Him to do. For the finishing of that work, thanks be to God, the saints do not "wait."

And still, all believers are the expectants of an "adoption" to be confirmed, and of a "redemption" to be perfected. Their adoption now is concealed; their adoption then will be visible. Their present adoption is limited in its privileges; their future adoption will introduce them to all the riches of their inheritance, and to all the splendors of their Father's house. For this unveiled, this manifest, this full adoption they are "waiting."

And so, too, of "redemption." The ransom-price is paid, but the body is not yet fully redeemed. It still is fettered, and cribbed, and cabined by a thousand clinging corruptions and infirmities. But the day of its complete redemption draws near. In virtue of its ransom it will spring from the dust, its last link of corruption entirely and forever dissolved. "But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere." Like unto Christ's glorious body! Oh, then, no deformity will mar its symmetry! no infirmity will impair its strength! no sickness, no fainting, no nervousness, no pangs of suffering or throes of death will ever assail and torment it more! For this "redemption of the body" the sons of God are waiting. Our heavenly Father has adopted it. Our Divine Savior has redeemed it. The Holy Spirit, our Comforter, has sealed it. Oh yes! The first-fruits of the "first resurrection" bloom on the grave of the holy dead. This page may arrest the eye of a sufferer, not soothed in his grief or cheered in his loneliness by such prospects as these. But there still is hope. Jesus died for sinners, and there is mercy even for the chief. Blessed suffering, hallowed sorrow, if now, in the agony of your grief, you are led to the Savior to learn, what in the sunny hour of prosperity and gladness you refused to learn, that God only can make you happy, and that God in Christ is prepared to make you happy. O heaven-sent affliction! sweet messenger of love! beautiful in your somber robes, bearing to my soul a blessing so divine, so precious as this! (**Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God**)

The State of God's Children

Romans 8:23

MUCH is spoken in Scripture respecting the happiness of the saints. And doubtless they are on many accounts the most blessed people upon earth. But they also experience in a great degree the sorrows that pervade the universe. It is not in this, but in the future world, that they are to attain perfect uninterrupted felicity.

The Apostle is here encouraging the afflicted Christians to endure their trials patiently, in expectation of a rich eternal recompence. He tells them that the whole creation were supported under their present sufferings by a hope of some happier state: and that he himself, notwithstanding the privileges he enjoyed, participated with them in the common lot.

From his words we are led to consider,

I. The state of the creation at large—

This is fully developed in the four verses preceding our text. There are however considerable difficulties in those verses; but chiefly arising from the inaccuracy of the translation. Read them thus, and the main difficulties will be overcome: "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God: (for the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same;) in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Thus, by translating the word *ktsis*, creation, and the word *hoti*, that, and by inclosing a part in a parenthesis, the whole will be made clear, and to a certain degree easy.

[The whole creation was reduced to a very deplorable condition by the fall of man. The material world underwent a most awful change: cursed was the ground for man's sake: the earth rendered barren without continual and laborious culture, or fruitful only in briars and thorns, which, if left unrestrained, would speedily overrun it: and the atmosphere rendered the fatal source of storms, and tempests, and pestilential vapours for the destruction of man. The animal world, first subjected to man's controul, and innoxious in all their habits, had such a change wrought within them, that they all of various orders prey one upon another, and are more or less arrayed in hostility to man. The rational world partook more largely still of this fatal change: for man universally, and without exception, was despoiled of the Divine image, and corrupted in all his faculties, whether of mind or body, and subjected to innumerable diseases, and miseries, and death.]

But things shall not always continue thus—

[There is a time coming, when God will manifest himself in a more especial manner to his own people; and it is therefore called, "The manifestation of the sons of God:" and then shall the sentence denounced against the whole creation be reversed, in order that every creature, according to its capacity, may partake of that universal blessedness. The material world will become again what it was at first, beautiful in all its parts, fertile to the utmost extent of man's necessities, and salubrious throughout every place and every clime. The animal world shall have all their venomous propensities removed, and the prophet's description shall be fully realized among them, "the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice' den: they shall not hurt nor destroy throughout God's holy mountain." The whole rational world shall then be converted unto God; "for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

Thus throughout the whole creation shall, to a certain extent, the paradisiacal state be restored.]

Now, as this will be a state of inconceivable blessedness, the whole creation is represented as looking and longing for it—

[It will be remembered that our blessed Lord was foretold as "the person whom all nations desired." Now he was foretold under that character, not because all nations did desire him, but because all nations, if they had known him, would have desired him. So here the whole creation is said to look and wait for the day spoken of in my text, not because they do indeed expect it with such solicitude, but because they would expect it in that way, if they were fully apprised of the blessedness attendant on it. And, as in other passages of Holy Writ, the

woods and the hills are often spoken of as participating in, and expressing, the joys of God's people; so here, by a very strong figure, the whole creation is represented as stretching forth the neck, with eagerness, in looking for it, and groaning with impatience for its arrival; yea, and as experiencing the pangs of parturition till they shall be liberated from their present burthen. Nor are these expressions at all too strong, if the different parts of the creation were capable of discerning and appreciating the blessedness of the change that shall await each in its proper sphere, and to the full extent of its capacity. Every part is at this time "under the bondage of corruption," that is, under the curse introduced by sin; and every part, according to its capacity, shall be delivered from that bondage, and be brought, so far as it is capable of it, into a participation of the "liberty that shall then be accorded to the children of God." These were the feelings assigned to the inanimate creation at the first advent of our Lord in his abased state; and the same creatures may well be said to pant for a renewal of their joys, when our Lord shall come again to establish his kingdom over the face of the whole earth.]

But all this may, almost without a figure, be uttered as descriptive of,

II. The state of God's children in particular—

These have already the foretaste of these joys in their own souls—

[The "first-fruits" were a part of any produce, devoted to God as an acknowledgment that the whole was from him: and whilst they sanctified the whole harvest, they assured to the possessor the full enjoyment of it. Now the harvest of "the Spirit" is that abundant effusion of holiness and happiness which God will pour forth on his people in the latter day, not unlike to what they enjoyed on the day of Pentecost, or to that which our first parents possessed in Paradise. And "of this Spirit God's people have now the first-fruits." They are renewed in the spirit of their mind after the very image of their God in righteousness and true holiness: and, with this renewal of their nature, they are also "filled with joy of the Holy Ghost;" even with a "joy that is unspeakable and glorified." Now it might be supposed that these, by reason of their present attainments, would be less anxious for the promised period before referred to, when the whole creation shall be restored, as it were, to its primeval purity and happiness. But the very reverse of this is the case: for in every age these are the persons who most pant and long for the promised felicity. Yes, says the Apostle, "ourselves who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our body."]

Of the joys they now experience they look forward to the everlasting consummation—

["Believers are now the children of God," his children both by adoption and grace. Now adoption, amongst the Romans, was two-fold; first, private, in the house, and afterwards public, in the forum. The former of these every believer has received already through the operation of the Spirit of God upon his soul: but for the latter he waits till that period when God shall come to gather together his elect from every quarter of the world, to restore to every soul its long mouldered body, and to make the whole man, in body and soul, eternally blessed in his presence. That is the period when "the body will enjoy the redemption" that has been long since possessed by the soul; and a blessedness will be then imparted to the whole man, of which his present most exalted happiness is but an earnest and foretaste. Now the believer knows that that period shall arrive: and he longs for it, and "groans within himself," through the ardour of his desires after it. Even here his anticipations of it have been sweet, infinitely beyond the powers of language to express, ("a joy unspeakable;") what then shall the full possession be in the complete enjoyment of his God? From the private adoption, by the testimony of the Spirit, he has been almost wrapt at times into the third heaven, notwithstanding the clog which his body has imposed upon his soul. What then shall the public manifestation of this honour in the presence of the whole assembled universe be, when his "redeemed body" shall possess all the purity and perfection of his soul, and not only partake of all the joys of his soul, but aid the soul in its everlasting possession of them? I wonder not that "St. Paul groaned in this body, being burthened; yea, that he groaned, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with his heavenly house, namely, with his body in its renovated and perfect state. This ought to be the state of every true believer; and it will be in proportion as he lives nigh to God, and has "his conversation in heaven."

By some the period referred to in my text is supposed to commence at the Millennium, of which time St. Peter speaks when he says, "We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And, if any find comfort in that view of the subject, I would not move a finger to rob them of it. I have no objection to persons following their own views of Scripture truth: every man has the same right to do it as I myself have. But, when these uncertain matters are made the subject of disputation in the Church of God, to the creating of dissensions and divisions, and to the turning of the minds of pious persons from the more clear and

fundamental truths of the Gospel, then I bitterly regret it, and am ready to weep over it as “a device of Satan to turn men from the simplicity that is in Christ.” If any choose to apply this passage to the Millennium, and to look for its accomplishment then, let them: but let them bear with those who cannot see with their eyes, or feel that there is any advantage in their views. Let all agree in this, to look and groan inwardly for the time of their consummate felicity, whether it occur at a little earlier or a little later period: for this is the point in which all are to agree; and in this consists the highest attainment of the Christian life: “We come behind in no gift, whilst we are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” to perfect our felicity; and we are sure, that “to those who so look for him, he will appear a second time unto their everlasting salvation.” My prayer therefore for all of you, my brethren, is, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into a patient waiting for Christ.”]

That I may bring this subject home more powerfully to men’s business and bosoms, I would add,

1. Let us not take up our rest in this world—

[This world is but a passage to a better, a wilderness which we must pass through in our way to the heavenly Canaan. As to our present accommodations, we need not be much concerned, whether they be a little more or less suited to our present convenience. We are but “pilgrims and sojourners here,” hoping in due season to attain our rest hereafter. Let us then look forward to “that rest which remaineth for us,” and under all existing difficulties derive our consolations from the prospect of the happiness that awaits us. This is, not the duty merely, but the high privilege, of the Christian. This it is which raises the Christian above all the world besides. What are crowns and kingdoms, if a man have no prospect beyond the grave? On the other hand, What is martyrdom itself to one who sees it as the very door of heaven, and knows that the body which agonized for a few moments, shall reign in glory for evermore? I say then to every one amongst you, “Set not your affection on things below, but on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God,” and where “all who suffer with him now, shall be glorified together with him “to all eternity.]

2. Let us press forward more earnestly after the happiness reserved for us—

[Who can conceive the blessedness of that state to which we are hastening? If “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived the things which are enjoyed by God’s people in this present world,” how much less can any just conception be formed of their future state? If the possession of the first-fruits be so glorious, what must the harvest be! If the privilege of being God’s children be so delightful now, that the very hope of it raises us above all the joys or sorrows of this present world, what shall the full manifestation of it be when all the interests of time and sense are for ever passed away? Let us then survey more and more the blessedness of heaven, where we shall behold face to face that Saviour who died for us, and be with him for ever, possessing, according to their capacity, all the fulness of his beauty, his felicity, and his glory. Dear brethren, let this prospect swallow up every inferior consideration, and animate us to run with ever increasing diligence the race that is set before us. Let us “forget all that is behind, and reach forward to that which is before, and press on with all imaginable ardour for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.” And, in the desire of that full blessedness, let us cry continually with the beloved Apostle, “Come, Lord, and take me to thyself; yea, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”] ([Romans 8:23 THE STATE OF GOD’S CHILDREN](#))