



## Biblical Documentation of the Divine Curse upon the Material Creation: Slavery to Corruption, Romans 8:19-21

26. The divine curse upon the material creation is Paul's subject in Romans 8:19-22. Some valuable principles are found in this passage and will assist us in interpreting Genesis 1:2. We will note the corrected translation of each of these four verses and follow each with a few principles that are pertinent to our study.

**Romans 8:19 - [CTL] The confident expectation of the material universe stands in eager anticipation for the revealing of the sons of God.**

- 1) The perfection of the universe, restored prior to the creation of Adam, was destroyed when Adam sinned.
- 2) Since the fall of Adam the universe itself has been under a curse waiting to be restored once more following the Second Advent of Christ.
- 3) This anticipated restoration to perfection is the millennial reign of Christ.
- 4) Between the fall of Adam and the Second Advent of Christ the world is designed to kill us.
- 5) The reason for the fallen creation's "eager anticipation" of the Second Advent is the subject of:

**Romans 8:20 - For the creation was subordinated [ at the fall ] to futility [ loss of predetermined function ] against its own will but because of Him Who has subordinated it in the time of confidence [ confident expectation of the Second Advent ].**

- 1) The original creation was perfect and so was the restoration. When Adam sinned it resulted in not only the human race falling under a curse but also the creation itself.
- 2) In the perfect environment of Eden, the earth was so ordered that its ecosystem efficiently provided year-round sustenance for our original parents even though the mandate to Adam required him to maintain it:

**Genesis 2:15 - Then the Lord took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.**

- 3) Thus the Lord restored the earth to provide man with his sustenance with minimal effort. Once man fell and the earth was cursed along with mankind, its benevolent provision entered into decay and it ceased to perform at its pristine efficiency.
- 4) Prior to the fall the earth was a perfectly functioning machine but following the fall it entered, metaphorically, into frustration, meaning that it could no longer provide sustenance at the same level of efficiency as before and this condition will continue until the Second Advent of Christ.

**Romans 8:21 - Therefore the material universe itself shall be set free from slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.**

- 1) Adam's fall caused the universe to fall. This resulted in the earth entering into a state of corruption and decay that did not exist before.
- 2) Note the English words "corruption" in the King James and New American Standard and "decay" in the New International Version. These two words translate the Greek noun **φθορά** *phthora* and it will be an important part of our study later on.



- 3) This verse indicates that the universe, which was thrown into decay and corruption by the fall of mankind, will be restored to perfection when believers of every completed dispensation achieve ultimate sanctification at the Second Advent.
- 4) All believers become a new creation at salvation and this will be manifested for all when Old Testament saints are resurrected at the Second Advent.
- 5) The environment for these glorified believers must be complementary to their universal perfection therefore the universe will be liberated from its curse as well.
- 6) The next verse however brings us back to the present reality of corruption and decay in both the universe and the human race.

**Romans 8:22** - For we know that the entire universe groans [ συστενάζω, *sustenazō* ] along with us and suffers the pains of childbirth [ συνωδίνω, *sunōdinō*: a personification—creation is depicted as enduring labor pains & suffering between the curse in **Genesis 3:17b** and the Millennium ] together with us until now.

- 1) The universe has been placed in a status of undeserved suffering. It was designed to provide perfect logistics for perfect people but when Adam fell then the universe also fell.
- 2) The verb “groans” is the present active indicative of συστενάζω, *sustenazō*. It is an hapax legomenon taken by Paul from the Classical Greek and its best definition is “to lament.”