

WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: FACTOR ONE

We Reap What Adam Sowed – The Curse/Chapter Three: Life’s Futility (continued)

Beyond the adversities that affect us specifically and personally, there is a general level of hardship in which we all participate, as fallen people living in a fallen world. God not only cursed the ground in Genesis 3, He also sent the Flood in Genesis 7. The logistics of how this worldwide flood took place are beyond the scope of our study. Yet the impact has been both dramatic and devastating. As a result of the Flood, human life expectancy began to decline. In addition, the earth itself became subject to extreme weather changes, violent storms and catastrophic upheavals. God’s involvement in these negative circumstances is not distant and indirect. The very opposite is true, as revealed in Isaiah 45:6-7 –

“That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.”

The fallen condition of our physical world contributes to the difficulty of our earthly existence. We know this not only from real life experiences like the most recent pandemic of the corona virus, but from the apostle Paul’s assertion in Romans 8:20-21 –

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

This passage teaches us that the created order has been “subjected to futility” and is in “slavery to corruption.” It has been relegated to such a negative condition by God Himself and He alone can restore it. The word “futility” speaks of frustration and aimlessness. As used here it speaks of nature’s inability to reach a goal or produce a desired result. This is best illustrated in the four seasons. No such change of seasons took place in the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall. The climate was constantly perfect, allowing Adam and Eve to live their everyday life without any clothing. Yet now, as nature seeks to recreate such a climate every spring and summer, the results are short-lived. Summer is followed by autumn and winter, only to be followed by another futile attempt by nature to create a constant and perfect environment in the spring.

The word “corruption” refers to a physical rather than a moral decay. Paul uses this word to remind us that we are living in a deteriorating universe. Scientists have observed this trend and have labelled it “the second law of thermodynamics.” The law simply states that even though matter is not being destroyed, it is becoming more scattered and unusable. In other words, everything is running down and wearing out, including each of us as we grow older. A less technical term, known as Murphy’s Law, has also been used to describe this phenomenon. This law claims that whatever can go wrong, will go wrong. No such “laws” existed in the Garden of Eden until Adam and Eve failed their test. Nevertheless, Paul derives a practical application from his Romans 8:20-21 personification. He wisely reminds us that the Christian life isn’t just about grinning. There is also groaning. Nature groans (8:22). A suffering humanity groans (8:23). Even the Holy Spirit, expressing His compassion and comfort, groans (8:26). Yet for the follower of Christ, such groaning doesn’t dim our hope, it only intensifies it (8:25).