

[Message] We are turning to Romans chapter 8, verse 18 through verse 27 for the exposition of the Word, and the reading of the Scripture this morning will be of those particular verses Romans 8:18 through verse 27. Next week, the Lord willing, we consider the great section Romans 8:28, 29 and 30, and we'll be considering some of the greatest of the doctrines of the Christian faith. I was on my way to Chicago this past week, reading one of the volumes that John Calvin had written, which I had never read, and in the course of it, he made the statement that all of our blessings flow out of divine election, and that is the subject for next Sunday.

I know a lot of people have said, "Dr. Johnson has strange views about the doctrine of election." If you are interested in hearing these strange views [Laughter] and discovering that they are nothing more than what the apostles taught, then we look forward to seeing you, the Lord willing, next Sunday. Then there's some of you that think of me as an ogre, and if you want to find out what's really true, well, then next Sunday we'll consider the doctrine of election as taught by the Apostle Paul. And if I stray from what the apostle teaches, well then you have just reason for condemning me.

But if I do say what Paul says, well then our conflict in that case is really with the apostles, so I am warning you ahead of time in case you don't like to hear message on that topic, next week might be a good time to take a vacation, but come back afterwards because the next passage is a passage of great comfort and hope built of course on that doctrine, but [Laughter] nevertheless a great passage of comfort and hope. So I have had some friends who say, "Well, Dr. Johnson, he just kind of rings the changes on that one doctrine." Well, I've tried to stay away from that to the extent to which the apostles stay away from it, but now we are facing it, and so I have to say something about it. I am warning you ahead of time.

Romans chapter 8 verse 18 through verse 27, is one of the more unique passages in Romans, and now will you listen as I read these verses.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature 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, Because 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. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body."

There are two think God's I would like for you to notice in that verse. When Paul says, the first fruits of the Spirit. It is likely that this expression of the spirit is an appositional genitive, which we would render in English, the firstfruits, which is the spirit, and then when he says waiting for the adoption, ordinarily when Paul speaks of the

adoption of sonship, he refers to the fact that we become sons through faith, in Jesus Christ, but that sonship has a further conclusion, and that is when the sons not only have their spirits redeemed, but their bodies redeemed as well. Our spirits have been redeemed now, if we are believers in Christ and we have a new spirit, new life, but we do await our new bodies, and the term adoption is a term broad enough in Paul's language to cover both the reception of life and also the resurrection, when we receive our new bodies, so that he defines as the redemption of our body.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. (Notice the singular.) For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (That probably is better rendered which are not uttered. In other words, this word probably means unuttered, not unutterable. That difference is minor, but I want to just at least mention it) and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Message] Our subject for this morning is "Three Groanings for Glory." The apostle has just completed in the preceding context of Romans chapter 8, verses 1 through 17 is treatment of the spirit's sanctification on the note of sonship, and heirship. He has said, "And if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together." One may, to use a figure of speech, look at our great salvation as a mountain range, and one may just consider the mountain range as Salvation Range, and then the peaks that jut up from it, we might call peaks, like Mt. Heirship, Mt. Sonship, Mt. Justification, Mt. Sanctification, Mt. Life and all of the other mounts that make up part of Salvation Range, but the highest peak of all in Salvation Mountains, is Mt. Glory and the apostle has alluded to that in the preceding verses, for he has said, that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together.

Bible teachers and preachers have often said, because the Bible seems to say this quite plainly, before we receive the crown, there is the cross. Before the glory there is a period of suffering, or to put it in the context of Romans chapter 8, before the glory a period of groaning. In other words, we learn that as we look at this mountain range of the peaks of salvation, Salvation Range, we discover that when we pass the peak of sonship and the peak of heirship there is a lengthy valley between those peaks, and the greatest peak of all, Mt. Glory, and that valley is called the Valley of Suffering. Sufferings are part of the heritage of believers. The apostle says, in one place, "All they who live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution."

Furthermore, the apostle says, in one of his other places, in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, "For which use we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." Our outward man is perishing constantly. So believers face a period of groaning, a period of suffering. There are physical sufferings, our outward man perishes, and there are also spiritual sufferings. There are the sufferings of misunderstanding. There are the sufferings of reproach. There are the sufferings of

mockery and slander. There is not, in my opinion a single Christian who has not had a forthright testimony for Jesus Christ, who has not had to bear some form of suffering. If only from one's own family, because very frequently the first experience of reproach for Jesus Christ that we experience is from those who are our closest friends, who are not yet believers in Jesus Christ, and we are accused frequently of being fanatical. There is hardly a Christian who hasn't at one time or another have been accused of being fanatical because of his desire simply to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The servant shall not be above his lord. "If they hated me, they will also hate you." The Lord Jesus said. We cannot escape those things, so in our Christian life, there is a period of suffering, but the period of glorifying is coming certainly. The children of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt found it necessary to pass through the wilderness before they entered the Promise Land. One of the commentators, whose writing I have enjoyed because he has a very happy way of putting things, is the Swiss commentator Volta Lute, and he has pointed out that a coat soaked with blood and sweat is promised to those who are allowed to wear the dress of glory here on this earth, so it is not surprising then that believers should experience suffering.

This passage is a very important passage in my opinion because it gives us an inkling of insight into the true significance of Romans chapter 7. I laid a little bit of stress when we dealt with Romans 7:13 through 25 upon the fact that in the Bible as believers we are never told that our life is going to be a life in which we attain a certain plane, which will be level, and it will be a plane in which everything will proceed along nicely, and one will be happy and joyous all the days of his life, until he meets the Lord.

Now, there is a sense in which we may experience joy. Our Lord Jesus was probably the most joyful human being who ever lived, but it was joy in the midst of great suffering. Now, the Bible does not promise us a life in which we do not have struggle, in which we do not have trial, in which we do not have suffering, in which we do not have to wrestle with powers that are stronger than we are. Romans 7 made that plain, and I tried to stress that because I do think often that Bible teachers make that mistake of telling individuals that they can live that kind of life, and then when they discover that the life that are called upon to live is a life of struggle, then they despair, and become defeated, and the tendency of some is to turn away from serious consideration of the word of God. Paul said, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He did not leave us without hope. He gave us the assurance of the presence of the Holy Spirit, but the presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of struggle.

Now, this passage on the groaning and the groaning of the saints of God themselves, supports and buttresses Romans chapter 7 verse 13 through verse 25, so it's a section that is very significant. It's bound together by the three-fold occurrence of that word, that root, groaning. Listen to verse 22, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." Verse 23, "And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the spirit even we ourselves groan within ourselves." And then verse 26, "But the spirit himself, maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Now, these groanings are a source of hope for us in this sense that they testified to us that the best is yet to be. The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, but it is not yet. In the meantime, groaning. H. G. Wells it is said, once said, in the midst of some of England's greatest struggles, "Either God has

the power and does not care, or God cares and does not have the power." Of course he was wrong. God has the power, God does care, but in his will, he desires for us to pass through sufferings in order that we may learn some significant truths useful for us. Well, we look first at the groaning of the creation. Then we shall look at the groaning of the children and finally at the groaning of the comforter the Holy Spirit himself. In verse 26 and verse 27.

Now, the apostle has just said, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with them that we may glorified together, for." Now, this is the reason, why we should endure suffering in order to be glorified. In other words these verses are designed to support us in the midst of our suffering. He does not incidentally, when he says in verse 17, "If so be that we suffer with him." Suggest that we shall escape. He writes that from the standpoint of an assumption of its reality, so now he's going to explain why we should endure suffering. He says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." This is an elliptical construction. It may be therefore rendered rather freely. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory. They are not worthy to be mentioned with the glory, someone has said. So in other words that apostle is saying you are going to have to suffer, but I want to support you in your sufferings by reminding you that those sufferings are not worthy to be mentioned, not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you.

Now one was not the Apostle Paul if he were to say that, well it would be much more understandable perhaps, and also the stress upon the glory might not be so significant as it is when we remember who it is who wrote this. It is doubtful that there is any Christian who ever suffered as the Apostle Paul suffered. Just listen to some of the things that were said with reference to him. Tradition is that he was finally martyred, but we are not certain of that. However these are some of the things that he says of his own life.

Now, he says this in a boastful way, he admits, but he said it because he was combating false teachers, and he found it necessary to this, but he apologized for it. He says, "If I must needs boast, I will boast of the things which concern mine infirmities." He says, "Are these false teachers, ministers of Christ? I speak as fool. I am more, in labors more abundant in stripes above measures, in prisons more frequently." Think of a man boasting of being in more prisons than others. What he's thinking about are these false teachers. They haven't spent time in prison because they are not preaching the kind of doctrine that offends people. They are preaching that one may believe in Jesus Christ, but one must also be circumcised in order to be saved, and thus the salvation by grace is reduced to a salvation by works, which the natural man wants to hear. He wants to think that he can do something to earn salvation, for that in effect says that merit is therefore possible to arise from man. So the apostle says, I've been in prison more frequently than they.

Think of a man boasting of how many times he been in prison, but he's in prison because he's preaching the doctrine of grace. In deaths often of the Jews, "Five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep in journeying often and perils of waters and perils by mine own countryman, and perils by the Gentiles, and peril in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false

brethren in weariness and painfulness and watching often in hunger and thirst and feastings often in cold and nakedness, beside those things that are without. That which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Now, this is the man who has suffered so greatly and this is the individual who says, "I want you to know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." If here the greatest suffers says this, what must the glory be? This same individual is the person who said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So Paul, yes, you are the greatest of sufferers, and if the greatest of sufferers can say, the glory is not worthy to be even mentioned in this, the glory must be surely great.

Now, that needs some explanation, and that of course is what the apostle gives it. He said, in effect suffering is a drop. Glory is an ocean. This is why. "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the manifestation of the glory." That word earnest expectation is one that was compounded of a Greek word that was a poetic word for the head, and then with another word and the suggestion of the two is of an individual who's stretching out his neck or craning his neck in order to see something. Earnest expectation, it's like a fellow who is sitting on row one on the zero yard line of the west side of the field, and a key play is taking place on the west side of the field on the one yard line in the opposite end of the field, so in order to see he must crane his neck out and look down this way in order to get a vision of it, so he speaks of the creation, this material creation about us as earnestly yearning for waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

This is a personification of the creation as if it were personal this creation about us, so he goes on to explain. For the creation, one might ask, "Oh how is it that the creation yearns for the manifestation of the sons of God?" Well, the creation was made subject to frustration, vanity, not willingly but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. He refers to the fall in the Garden of Eden, and the judgment that was pronounced upon the creation. In fact, this is really Paul's commentary upon Genesis 3:17, 18 and 19, and to epitomize it, it's his commentary upon the clause, "Cursed is the ground for Thy sake." So the creation is subject to the curse. When we look about us, and we see this beautiful creation, and we say, "The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament showeth his handiwork, we can see the hand of God in creation." We stand by the Grand Canyon, and we are awed by what we see, or we for the first time, see the Atlantic, or Pacific oceans, as we are awed by that great body of water, or we're in the Alps, and we look and we see one of these magnificent peaks, and we are awed by that.

Well, I want you to know, those great manifestations of the glory of God stand under the curse. That's what they look like, when they are under the curse. The creation is longing to be delivered from the curse. It brings forth thorns and thistles now, but it is truly to be beautiful in the future. Tourist business must be good during the millennial kingdom.

The apostle is explaining. "For the creation was made subject to vanity. Not willingly but by reason of him who hath subjected the same. It's God who cursed the creation, but he did it in hope." Paul says, and the hope is the deliverance, and he explains what that means in the 21st verse. "Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of

God." This creation about us is subjected to the bondage of decay because it is closely united with the history and destiny of man, and so when man fell, his creation is cursed. When man finally enters into the blessing of the Kingdom of God upon the earth, the whole creation shall enter into that blessing too, shall be renewed. We speak of this as the golden age.

Now, finally he concludes by saying in verse 22, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Not only is the creation under decay, but it is also groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God in order that the glorification of the creation may take place.

Now, if you have eyes to see, you can look around in this creation and see that groaning. You know what Paul's talking about. You see a sobbing black bird. That's an evidence of the groaning. The earthquakes that take place, in evidence of the groaning, the broken dams that cause tragedy, the divorces that cause personal tragedies. All the human tragedy is part of this groaning, and travailing together in pain until now.

Now, the apostle uses a word here I would like to stress there, in verse 22. He says, "The whole creation groans and travails." Now that is a word, which is used in the Old Testament and also in the New Testament of a woman's birth pangs, the pangs of a pregnant woman as she is to bring forth birth of a child. So the apostle says that the creation not only groans, which has reference to the past, but also is travailing in pain because a new creation, a renewed earth is to result, so that there is a new birth that is to take place of the creation itself, so there are not only death pangs, but birth pangs. One is reminded of the fact that this has been the incentive of poets in their expression of some of the human yearnings for deliverance from the pains and sorrows of an obviously incomplete and imperfect existence.

Keble in one of his poems writes about nature, "Strong yearnings for a blessed new birth, with sinless glories crowned." Wordsworth and his "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" wrote these words. "There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, the earth and every common sight, to me did seem, a periled in celestial light. The glory and freshness of a dream it is not now as it hath been of yore. Turn where so ever I may by night or day the things, which I have seen I now can see no more. Waters on a starry night are fair. The sun shine is a glorious birth, but yet I know where'er I go that there hath passed away a glory from the earth." That is true, but a glory is to come.

Now, of course the apostle probably has something more specific in mind when he says, "That the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Travailing. It so happens that in Rabbinic literature, the days of the Messiah are spoken of as the days of the birth pang of the Messiah. For in Jewish thought the Messiah was going to come. He would establish his kingdom upon the earth, and the birth pang of the Messiah was the time of tribulation preceding that Kingdom of God upon the earth.

In my opinion that's what the apostle has in mind here. He's thinking about the time, when Jesus Christ shall come to the earth as Israel's Messiah, as the world's ruler, king of kings and Lord of Lords, and he's thinking about the renewal of the earth, in which the curse of Genesis 3 shall be removed, and the creation shall enter into the glory of the liberty of the sons of God. I think this is a verse that premillennialists can rejoice in because I believe the apostle is speaking of that Kingdom of God upon the earth. The entire creation Paul says, then sets up a grand sympathy of size waiting for the time of the manifestation of the children of God.

Now, Paul says, not only does the creation groan, but the children groan too. Listen, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan." The experiences of the sons of God, attest the coming glory. By the way this is an attestation of the exposition of Romans 7 that I gave too, because you see when I said that in Romans chapter 7 Paul presents for us the Christian life as a constant struggle that goes on deep down within between the law of sin and death, and the law of my mind, here Paul speaks of it as a groaning. And characteristic of the children of God is this groaning of which he speaks, and it continues as long as we are here upon this earth. Even though, "Although we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body."

And I don't [want] to give the impression, well, I'm right about all interpretations that I give of the Bible. I surely am not. I don't know of any that I'm wrong about, [Laughter] but I do know that as time passes, I discover I have made errors in the interpretation of Scripture, but I do want to stress this because it has been taught with such a wrong emphasis. This confirms the fact that in Romans chapter 7 this struggle that Paul speaks about is something that characterizes us as long as we are in the flesh. There is this groaning he says, groaning for the adoption, and furthermore that groaning just as that struggle, they do not end until the resurrection of the body. That's a future event. He says here, "We groan waiting for the adoption that is the redemption of our body, the resurrection." There is a struggle then for the Christian as long as he is in the flesh, until the resurrection of the body, then we shall receive a body like unto our Lord's own glorious body, we shall not have those desires to turn away from the will of God, they shall be taken from us. We will not any longer be indifferent, lethargic. We will not be able to think of a thousand different reasons why should not do the will of God in a particular instance, because we will want to do exactly what the Lord God wants us to do throughout all eternity. And I want you to know that for individuals who have struggled, with the will of God this is a glorious promise to know that we are no longer held down by the sin principle that dwells within our members.

Now, Paul says, "Even though we have the firstfruits of the Spirit." That's a marvelous expression. The Spirit as the firstfruits because after all to possess the Spirit is not only the sign the we belong to the Lord God, but it is to possess the third person of the Trinity, but what Paul says, is to possess the third person of the Trinity is not to possess all of spiritual life, we shall have even more glorious experiences in the future. He's the firstfruits, but there is more beyond. He alludes to the ancient custom of the feast of the firstfruits at which at a particular time the children of Israel went out into the barley harvest usually, cut down a sheaf of the barley harvest, brought in the grain, and waved it before the Lord. This was to celebrate the harvest that was out in the fields, but that sheaf was both an earnest and a guarantee. It was a sample as well, I should have said, a sample and an earnest. It's as an installment, and it was a guarantee. As they brought it in from the field, it was a sample of what was still out in the field, and it was also the assurance that there was much more out there.

Now, the Lord Jesus is called in his resurrection the firstfruits of the resurrection. That means that there are others that are going to be resurrected. You remember he says, "First Jesus Christ, then they who are Christ's at his coming." That is you and I.

Now, if the Spirit is the firstfruits that means we're going to have more of the spirit life that is to come. He is a sample of what we shall receive, and he is an earnest that there is more. He is an installment, but he is also the pledge and the Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection is also a sample of the great resurrection that shall take place when he comes and the saints shall be caught up to meet him in the air. Those that are in the grave shall receive their resurrection bodies. We shall be changed. Together we shall meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. What a wonderful thing it is to be identified with him, firstfruits of the Spirit. It's a magnificent blessing to have the Holy Spirit now, but that's the firstfruits. The adoption, the redemption of our bodies, someone has said, the man who is satisfied with the earth does not know what heaven is. You can never be satisfied with earth if you are a Christian reading the word of God.

Now, then we groan, the creation groans, and the most amazing thing of all is the Holy Spirit groans too. Not only does our hope sustain us, we have the help of the Holy Spirit in his groanings. There is an ascending order in the groanings. The creation, the children and then the comforter himself, he groans too. Paul says, the "The Spirit who helpeth our infirmity."

Now, when he says, helpeth our infirmity. He really does not mean he helps us in all of the struggles of life. That of course is true, but he is not thinking of that. The apostle's thinking about release from this body. He's thinking about release from this body, in which the sin principle dwells. He's thinking about release from all of those attitudes and dispositions characteristic of us, that tend to turn us away from the will of God, seeking after the desires of the flesh, or the desires of our mind, seeking to be great in the light of the world, all of those things. He says, "The Holy Spirit helpeth us in our infirmity." Singular, it is our longing for release from this earth. He helps us in that. He explains, "For we know not what we should pray for as is necessary, But the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us, with unuttered groanings."

And I think that means that the Holy Spirit down within us in ways that are not the ways of articulate speech prays for us in our release in the present environment, and struggles. Isn't it great? We have two divine intercessors. We have one in heaven, who is at the right hand of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us. Paul will refer to this in verse 34, and we also have the Holy Spirit within us, and he too prays that we might be released from the present troubles and trials, and he does it with groanings that are unuttered. What to me is the climax of this whole paragraph is the last statement he makes in verse 27, "And he that searcheth the hearts (That's the Father) knows what is the mind of the Spirit, (Well, there are two divine persons,) he knows what is the mind of the spirit because he (the Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints (in behalf of the saints) according to God."

Now, what does that mean? "He makes intercession in behalf of the saints according to God." Well, of course it means he prays according to the will of God, but isn't it interesting, and isn't it really a wonderful truth to realize that the Holy Spirit makes intercession according to the will of God, but his intercession is in behalf of the saints. "For our good." In other words to put it in an expanded way, it is the will of God that the Spirit pray for our good. God's prayers are always answered. The Lord Jesus said, "I know that Thou hearest me always, and the Spirit prays for us according to the will of God and his prayers are always answered." Ah, we are truly blessed. We are truly blessed. We have a comforter praying for us according to the will of God. We have the

son of God our representative at the right hand of the Father, he too is praying for us, and you dear suffering groanings saints, you are going to experience the glorification that God has promised in the word of God.

We do have a Methodist here. [Laughter] I welcome you. Glad you are here. That's a great climax for this section of course. Let me close by saying this. We've been talking about the sons of God, but there are two sets of sons on the earth. There are the sons of God, who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and there are also the sons of disobedience, for them the future is not glory, the future is wrath. They shall have a resurrection, but their resurrection is the resurrection unto damnation and judgment. Ours is the resurrection unto life. Students of history have noticed something rather significant I think. The apostle, you see says that the whole creation is travailing in pain like a pregnant mother about to deliver a child, and the suggestion is that the child in the renewed earth.

Now, characteristic of a woman's birth pangs is that as the birth draws near, the time between the pangs becomes shorter and shorter. It has been the conviction of some students of the word of God that we have seen evidence of this in human history, and that in recent history, for example we can see evidence of a shortening in the birth pangs of the creation. If you will study the history of war, and particularly world war, beginning back with the French Revolution on down in to the 20th century, you will notice that in the great cataclysmic, worldwide types of wars, or sections of nations' wide wars, there has been shortening of distance between them. One can also notice this in the shortness of time between the earthly tragedies.

Just the other day, I was reading in a book, in which a Christian author had a list of some of the major earthquakes of the 1970s alone. In 1970 in Turkey more than a thousand dead. In Northern Peru the same year more than thirty thousand died in an earthquake. In 1971, in the Los Angeles area, sixty-four people died. In Turkey in 1971 more than eight hundred dead. In Iran in 1972 forty-five villages leveled, more than five thousand dead. In Managua, Nicaragua, the same year seventy percent of the city destroyed, more than ten thousand dead. In Central Mexico in 1973 twenty thousand left homeless, five hundred and twenty-seven died. In Turkey again 1975, twenty three hundred twelve people dead, thirty-three hundred injured. In Guatemala in one of the great earthquakes in 1976, one million people left homeless, twenty two thousand dead, seventy-four thousand injured. In Italy that year '76, more than a thousand dead. In Indonesia, three thousand missing, four hundred and forty dead. In Indonesia again, six hundred dead, thirty-four hundred injured. In China one of the greatest catastrophes in history, seven hundred thousand people died in 1976 in that Chinese earthquake. In the Philippines eight thousand dead or missing. In Turkey more than four thousand dead all in 1976. 1977 in Bucharest, Romania fifteen hundred dead. Iran again five hundred and twenty dead. Again in Iran in 1978 more than twenty-five thousand dead. 1979 Iran, Iran's been on the front page, haven't they? Two hundred dead, Yugoslavia, one hundred and twenty-nine dead, but eighty thousand left homeless.

It's almost as if the earthquakes so characteristic of the last days are beginning to occur with increasing frequency. This is not to mention those of 1980 themselves. The great commentator Bengel, when he reaches this point in his commentary, He lays down his pen, and he prays as he looks to God, "Glorified, O God, what art Thou making of us?" Isn't it wonderful to realize what he is making of us? He is glorifying us,

and all true Christians are groaning in anticipation of the time when we shall be delivered and rejoice in the presence of the triune God.

If you are here this morning and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have no hope. These groanings are the groanings of the children of God, groanings for release, but you have no hope at all. The future for you is the resurrection of the sons of disobedience or resurrection unto damnation, but there is time. Now, is the day of salvation. Now, is the accepted time you may flee to the cross of Jesus Christ, who offered the atoning sacrifice by which you may have eternal life, and resting in him, and in what he's done, you shall have the hope that the saints of God have. That the children of God, that the creation and that the Holy Spirit himself has of the future day when we enjoy the adoption the redemption of our bodies. May God help you to come. Come to Christ. Believe in him. Rejoice in his salvation. Join us in our hope and our journey through the presence of the triune God. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we want to praise Thee and thank Thee for the assurance of the hope that we have as we look at ourselves, and realize Lord that there is nothing within us with which we may be commended before a holy God. We marvel at the grace shown to us, the mercy shown to those who are miserable and without hope and without God, until the Holy Spirit shone into our darkened hearts with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God and the face of Jesus Christ.

O God, enlighten minds and hearts, at this very moment in this auditorium. May we see ourselves as we truly are, and may we see the blood shed for the redemption of sin. May we flee to Christ on whose bosom there is the resting place for eternity for all who desire the forgiveness of sins. O God, move hearts to come to him. Now, may grace, mercy and peace go with us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.