

HUMAN CREATION'S GROANING—WHEN WILL IT END?

Note to the speaker:

Be uplifting and optimistic. Stress that right from Adam's rebellion, Jehovah has had matters well under control. Those who in faith cooperate with God's purposes have a wonderful future

FUTILITY OF MANKIND'S SITUATION TODAY (5 min.)

Many today have a sense of futility; they see no real future

All people, rich or poor, suffer sickness and death

Such problems as political instability, polluted environment, overpopulation, crime, and economic insecurity make many wonder if there is any real hope for the future

The apostle Paul well describes man's situation (Read Romans 8:22)

Is any solution in sight? Yes, as Paul explains at Romans 8:18-25

Let us consider the background of what he said

SINCE REBELLION IN EDEN, MANKIND HAS BEEN ALIENATED FROM GOD (8 min.)

Mankind had a perfect start, was not "groaning"

Adam and Eve, made in God's image, were placed in an earthly paradise

All needs were cared for, had stimulating assignments of work, no sickness, prospect of living forever (Ge 1:26-30)

First couple went beyond the bounds God had set for them; they sinned (Ge 3:1-6)

Introduction of sin led to pain, hardship, death; Adam and Eve began to 'groan' (Ge 3:16-19)

Adam passed sin and death on to his children (Ro 5:12)

Life became as Solomon described (Read Ecclesiastes 1:14)

Jehovah gave basis for hope when he promised the Seed (Ge 3:15)

Promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who was appointed High Priest and King of God's Kingdom

Jesus gave life as ransom to redeem mankind from sinful state

In a wonderful way by his spirit, Jehovah adopts 144,000 humans to reign as kings and priests with Jesus (Re 20:4)

Paul had all of this in mind when he was inspired to write what is recorded at Romans 8:18-25

He pointed to the way by which mankind would be rescued from futility

We will discuss these verses

THE REVEALING OF THE SONS OF GOD (15 min.)

Read Romans 8:18

"Us" refers to the anointed Christians, of which Paul was one

"Sufferings" are the persecution and hardships they experienced as anointed Christians, culminating in death, as exemplified by Jesus

'The glory to be revealed' is their hope of reigning as kings with Christ in his heavenly Kingdom

Such an assured hope means that for anointed Christians, life has meaning; they have an assured, wonderful future

Read Romans 8:19

"The creation" is mankind in general

"Sons of God" are anointed Christians (Ro 8:16, 17)

"Eager expectation" of pre-Christian men of faith, who longed to learn of salvation linked to revealing of sons of God (1Pe 1:10)

"Revealing of the sons of God" is a vital part of helping mankind as a whole escape futility

"Revealing" comes with great tribulation when Jesus, along with resurrected anointed ones, removes enemies of Jehovah from scene (2Th 1:6-10; Re 2:27)

During Thousand Year Reign, in a new world of righteousness, mankind will continue to have the benefits of Jesus' ransom sacrifice applied to them (2Pe 3:13; Re 22:1-3a)

All faithful mankind will be lifted to perfection, and causes of "groaning" will be removed

This arrangement is God's will, as following verse shows

Read Romans 8:20

Mankind not "subjected to futility" through own will

Humans born after the first sin had no control over Adam's sin, nor did they ask to be born

It was Jehovah who allowed sinful Adam and Eve to have children, thus subjecting those children to futility

This was, however, "on the basis of hope," provided initially through God's promise of a seed

Faithful men of old, although not exempt from problems of humankind, had hope (Heb 11:10)

Read Romans 8:21

Through Jesus' ransom sacrifice, during Thousand Year Reign, mankind will be "set free from enslavement" to sin (Joh 3:16)

At end of thousand years, obedient humans will have been brought to perfection by Jesus and his associate priests

Those who remain faithful through final test will have their names written permanently in the book of life (Re 20:12-15)

"Revealing of the sons of God" will result in faithful mankind's enjoying "glorious freedom of the children of God"

FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS WAIT IN HOPE (5 min.)

Read Romans 8:22

Today "all creation keeps on groaning"

All mankind suffer mental and physical corruption

Human efforts at salvation—social, political, economic, or scientific—are doomed to frustration

Read Romans 8:23

Even anointed—those with heavenly hope—"groan within themselves"

They suffer effects of imperfection and need support of holy spirit in praying for help (Ro 8:26)

Although born again as sons of God, they are "waiting for adoption as sons"

Full realization of adoption, their receiving a heavenly reward, depends on faithfulness unto death (Ro 8:17)

Read Romans 8:24

Until anointed go to heaven, Jehovah cultivates in them a firm hope of life in the heavenly Kingdom

Hence, they are "saved in this hope"

Read Romans 8:25

Anointed ones keep on "waiting for it with endurance"

They do not give up, even though their hope has not yet arrived (Heb 12:2, 3)

AN EARTHLY CLASS HOPES FOR "THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD" (6 min.)

Romans 8:18-25 is directed primarily to anointed, who look forward to ruling with Christ in heavenly Kingdom

Hope for rest of mankind is a restoration of what Adam lost—perfect human life on a paradise earth (Ps 37:11, 29)

Likely most, if not all, hearing this talk share this hope

Paul's words to the Roman Christians show that salvation of mankind is bound up with the faithfulness of Jesus and his anointed brothers

By now most of 144,000 have 'conquered' and have taken their place in heaven (Re 3:5, 12, 21)

This means that their revealing can begin soon

World conditions bear this out; sign of end of this system of things is clearly evident (Mt 24:3, 7-14, 34)

Soon the revealing of sons of God will bring an end to Satan's world (1Jo 2:17)

In new system of things, they will work with Christ to help mankind regain what Adam lost (Re 21:3, 4)

BLESSINGS THROUGH "SONS OF GOD" NOW AND IN FUTURE (6 min.)

The remaining ones of "sons of God" still on earth are a wonderful example of faith

They act as channel for spiritual food even now (Mt 24:45-47)

With this help, "other sheep" exercise faith in Jesus' ransom, hoping to benefit either by resurrection into new system of things or by survival of the end of this system (Joh 5:28, 29; 10:16; Re 7:9, 14)

Our hope is real, although fulfillment is still future

Let us stay close to the anointed by associating with Jehovah's organization, 'keep on waiting with endurance' for the realization of our hope (Ro 8:25)

We will finally be among those "set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God"

(See also *w99* 5/1 4-7; *w98* 2/15 17-22; *w98* 9/15 15-20; *w97* 5/15 14; *it-1* 50-1; *hs* 131-7)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)