

Romans 8:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Analysis

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now (oidamen hoti pâsa hē ktísis sustenázei kai sunōdínei áchri toû nûn)—Oidamen ("we know") is shared apostolic and experiential knowledge—observable reality. Pâsa hē ktísis ("the whole creation") is comprehensive: every part of the sub-human created order. Sustenázei ("groans together") and sunōdínei ("travails in pain together") both use the sun- prefix, indicating unified suffering.

Sunōdínei ("travails in birth pangs") is crucial: this isn't death agony but labor pains producing new life. The groaning is purposeful, anticipating delivery. Áchri toû nûn ("until now") indicates continuous state from the Fall until Paul's writing—and beyond, until Christ's return. Creation's groaning testifies to both curse (decay) and hope (coming birth of new creation). Every earthquake, storm, and death points backward to sin and forward to redemption.

Historical Context

The image of birth pangs as eschatological metaphor appears throughout Scripture (Isaiah 66:7-9; Jeremiah 22:23; Matthew 24:8). Jewish apocalyptic literature called Messiah's advent "birth pangs of the Messianic age." Paul applies this to new creation—present suffering precedes coming glory as labor precedes birth.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Where do you observe creation's "groaning"—how does nature testify to the Fall's effects?
2. How does viewing suffering as "birth pangs" rather than meaningless pain provide hope?
3. What does creation's unified groaning teach about the cosmic scope of redemption—why does God care about more than individual souls?

Interlinear Text

οἶδαμεν	γὰρ	ὅτι	πᾶσα	ἡ	κτίσις	συστενάζει	καὶ
we know	For	that	the whole	^{G3588}	creation	groaneth	and
^{G1492}	^{G1063}	^{G3754}	^{G3956}		^{G2937}	^{G4959}	^{G2532}
συνωδίνει	ἄχρι	τοῦ	νῦν·				
travailleth in pain together	until	^{G3588}	now				
^{G4944}	^{G891}		^{G3568}				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 12:4 (Parallel theme): How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.

Jeremiah 12:11 (Creation): They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.

John 16:21 (Parallel theme): A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

Colossians 1:23 (Creation): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Romans 8:20 (Creation): For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,