

# Suffering and Hope of Our Physical World

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## Romans 8:18-25

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that **the sufferings** of this present time are not worth comparing with **the glory** that is **to be revealed for us**.

<sup>19</sup> For **the creation waits** with **eager longing** for the **revealing** of the **children of God**. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be **set free** from **its bondage to corruption** and obtain the **freedom** that goes with the **glory** of the **children of God**.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that **the whole creation** has been **groaning together** in the **pains of childbirth** until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but **we ourselves**, who have the **firstfruits of the Spirit**, **groan inwardly** as we **wait eagerly** for **adoption**, the **redemption of our bodies**.

<sup>24</sup> For **in hope we were saved**. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if **we hope for what we do not see**, we **wait for it with patience**.

## Romans 11:34-36

<sup>34</sup> “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” (Isa 40:13)  
<sup>35</sup> “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” (Job 41:11) <sup>36</sup> For **from him and through him and to him are all things**. To him be glory forever. Amen.

## 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

<sup>5</sup> For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth-- as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”-- <sup>6</sup> yet for us there is **one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist**, and **one Lord, Jesus Messiah, through whom are all things and through whom we exist**.

## Genesis 1:1

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, **God created** the heavens and the earth.

## Isaiah 65:17-18

<sup>17</sup> “For behold, **I create new heavens and a new earth**, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and **rejoice forever in that which I create**; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.

## Philippians 3:10, 20-21

<sup>10</sup> I want to **know Christ** and the **power of his resurrection** and the **sharing of his sufferings** by becoming like him in his death. ...

<sup>20</sup> ... we await a Savior, Lord Jesus Messiah, <sup>21</sup> who will **transform** our lowly body to be like his **glorious body**, by the **power** that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

## John 11:25

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life**.”

## **An All-Inclusive World with Direction**

Since Easter we have been exploring the meaning of Jesus' resurrection. The start of Christian faith and proclamation is incomprehensible without it, yet not one of the disciples believed in it before the event actually happened. Then they struggled to understand. It changed everything. Not just a doctrine about the future, but a lens that revealed a whole vision of the world and ourselves. Great Spoiler Alert.

The Bible begins with God as creator. Resurrection says history moves toward God as re-creator, renewer of all creation. *"From him, through him, to him are all things."* Earth day – we see the fragility of even something as vast as the earth. Resurrection says that God cares for the physical world – his creation; wants us as wise stewards.

Resurrection says that God has a direction for the whole of creation. It stands apart from any view of life that says it's purposeless, directionless, nihilistic. Creator is Goal. All of God's work in us, in the Gospel, in the physical universe is one whole.

## **Including Science and Whatever is True**

We live in a period when some Christians and some scientists want to keep up a great battle between "science" and faith in God. But God is the God of all truth. God reveals himself in "Two Books" – an ancient idea – the book of the physical creation and the book of his long interaction with people recounted in scripture. If you want to know the age of a fossil or how a disease works or the structure of matter, you read the physical creation. But like scripture it is hard to interpret.

The development of scientific method and research is one of the greatest developments of history. The structures, from viruses to galaxies to Higgs bosons, were always there, but without the inventions of mathematics, new instruments, and new conceptions, we still would have little idea of disease or electricity or much else.

Scientific research works so well because of its rigorous limits – methodological naturalism, repeatability, falsifiability, etc. It is important not to push theology into the working of scientific research. It works because of clear focus on what people can control: hypotheses, experiments, instruments, mathematics. Problems arise when people assert that focused area is all there is – excluding larger realities.

Resurrection points to the vast reality of God's work, within which science is a great project to understand how the physical creation works and to use that knowledge.

## **Including Conscience, Beauty, Evil, Hope, and Love**

Resurrection and the Gospel says that the physical world is God-given and worth all that research. But because God is creator/sustainer/renewer of the world (inventor of the Higgs boson), the reality of the world is vastly complex on levels of morality, aesthetics, freedom and responsibility, relationships, brokenness, love and grace.

Paul's vision in Rom. 8 links our story as God's children with the whole of God's creation. We live with suffering, transience, self-destruction – like the physical world. We groan, the creation groans, God's Spirit groans like childbirth, awaiting a renewal beyond what we can see. But we have caught a glimpse of it in Jesus' resurrection and in the Holy Spirit. We learn to live in the vision of resurrection.

The physical world is a wonder on every level. That pervasive wonder flows from that fact that God is not only a physicist but also "God is love." Even while wait in a broken world we can live that Love of God by the resurrection power of his Spirit.