

Redemption of Creation



Longing for His Appearing (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. Our theme this week has been "Longing for His Appearing." I trust you've found it inspiring. If so, please let me hear from you. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's only a brief personal note. Write today. Now, back to our theme, "Longing for His Appearing."

In my previous talks this week I've given you three important biblical reasons why all Christians should be longing for Christ's appearing. First of all, it will mark and achieve the consummation of our personal salvation which is the redemption of our bodies which will not be complete until Christ returns and our bodies are resurrected and glorified like his.

Second, it will bring about the consummation of our union first of all with Christ himself as our bridegroom and then with all our fellow believers. Describing this Paul says, "so shall we ever be with the Lord." That's the final, eternal union which will never be broken.

Third, I pointed out yesterday that the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom is the only hope for suffering humanity, it's the only thing that will put an end to war, poverty, sickness, oppression, injustice, hatred, and all the other evils that stalk the face of the globe today. Only Jesus, by his personal return, the setting up of his kingdom, will bring righteousness and peace and relief and deliverance to the oppressed and to the sick and to the suffering.

Today I'm going to give you a fourth and final reason why all of us should be longing for Christ's appearing. And it is this and it may surprise you, you may never have thought about this but it's very clearly stated in scripture that the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom will bring about the redemption of creation. You see, man's fall brought what the Bible calls vanity of futility on the whole area over which God has given him authority. This is a tragic and terrible thought. Not only did man's fall involve himself but it involved the whole area over which God had made him the ruler under

God. But when he rebelled against God not only did he suffer, not only did his descendants suffer, but the whole creation suffered. This is how God pronounced judgment on Adam after the fall in Genesis 3:17-19:

> "Then [God said] to Adam, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it, Cursed is the ground because of you: in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you: and you shall eat the plants of the field: by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (NAS)

Notice those two statements about the ground. "Cursed is the ground…thorns and thistles it shall grow for you…" There's a very beautiful picture in the New Testament illustrating that Jesus not merely procured redemption for the human race by his death and resurrection but he procured redemption for all of creation because at a certain point in his trial they mocked him and they put on him a purple robe and they put a crown of thorns on his head. And as he stood there the thorns and the purple [which is the color of the thistle] showed that he was not merely redeeming mankind but he was redeeming creation by his death and resurrection.

This realm of the earth, this realm over which Adam was made ruler under God is called in the book of Ecclesiastes the "realm under the sun." If you don't take note of those words "under the sun" you'll not understand the book of Ecclesiastes because it sounds so hopeless and so negative. But you have to understand its perspective is deliberately limited to the things under the sun, to this natural realm on this globe, and what Ecclesiastes says about that is entirely true. This is what is written in Ecclesiastes 1:2-3:

> "Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher. Vanity of vanities! All is vanity."

Notice the word vanity occurs five times in one verse. Surely that's emphatic. Vanity is now commonly translated futility. And then it says:

> "What advantage does man have in [all] his work which he does under the sun?" (NAS)

I pointed out to you earlier in my talks that the church should be waiting eagerly for the revelation of Jesus but here it says that creation is waiting eagerly for the revelation of the sons of God which will come at the revelation of Jesus. Now I'll continue, verse 20:

> "For the creation was subjected to futility…"

Or vanity. That's the word that comes from Ecclesiastes.

> "…not of its own will, 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. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly [notice again that phrase 'waiting eagerly'] for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." (NAS)

So Paul says the whole creation has been suffering because of man's sin and man's fall. And he says the whole creation is waiting for the finalization, the completion of man's redemption because the completion of man's redemption will bring redemption to the creation. Man's fall brought futility or vanity or corruption, all those words can be used. Man's redemption will deliver creation from that condition. And Paul says that those of us who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we're aware of what's going on in the creation, we identify with it. We go through a kind of labor pains on behalf of the creation, longing and praying for the redemption of the creation. Now I have to ask myself, "How many Christians do I know today that share and identify with the suffering of all creation and are in labor pains of travail to bring about the redemption of creation?" But that is a mark of those who have the first fruits of the Spirit.

Notice the key words there. First of all, wait eagerly. We are waiting eagerly, creation is waiting eagerly. We're all waiting for the same event. And then notice the key negative words: futility, or vanity, slavery, corruption. And then notice the opposite words: freedom, glory and redemption. That can only take place for creation at the return of Jesus. When he is revealed and we are revealed as sons of God, because as I pointed out earlier our life is presently hid with Christ in God. But when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory. And Paul states very emphatically that this will only take place at the redemption of our body. There have been teachings that have suggested that somehow all this will happen before the resurrection. That is incorrect. It is an error. It can only take place at the

redemption of our body.

And then, in the book of Psalms there are some beautiful pictures of creation longing for redemption because they're longing for the return of the Lord. Psalm 97:11-13:

> "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad: let the sea resound, and all that is in it: let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy: they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He sill judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth." (NIV)

You see, the trees, the forests, the mountains, the seas, they are all aware that they cannot be redeemed until the Lord comes back. But, oh, they're getting ready to welcome him boisterously, with exuberance.

There's another similar picture in Psalm 98:7-9:

> "Let the sea resound, and all that is in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands [what a beautiful picture!], let the mountains sing together for joy: [What's all the excitement about?] let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity." (NIV)

It's a strange thought really that creation somehow understands what a lot of Christians don't understand, that their redemption depends upon our redemption. And because of that they're longing for our redemption and they're getting ready to welcome the Lord when he comes back in glory. And I close this series of talks this week with this question: Is nature perhaps more excited than the church? Would that be a reproach if that were true, if nature were all getting ready to welcome the Lord and the church was asleep, indifferent? A bride who was not excited about the return of her bridegroom? May that never be true.

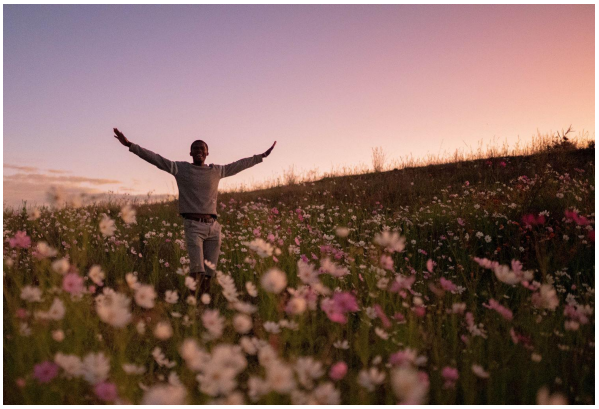
Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll continue with this theme, "Longing for His Appearing."

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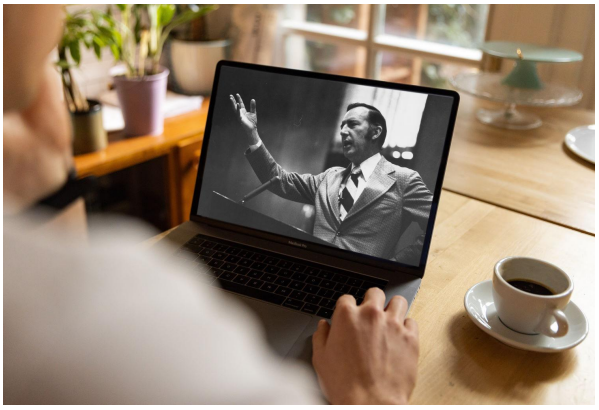
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