***Hope in the Future, No. 1
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This morning, we continue in the book of Romans 8:22-25, a new section, section number 1, on our subject of hope in the future.

**The Reversal of the Curse upon Nature**

We are all aware of the fact that the rebellion of Adam and Eve against the Word of God in the Garden of Eden ruined the perfect environment on the face of the earth which surrounded them up to that time. Before they had sinned, they enjoyed an easy life of personal development and recreation. All their material needs were provided simply for the taking. Disobedience to the Creator brought down divine judgment upon them, upon their posterity, and upon the world of nature in which they lived. In a moment of time, they spoiled it all they lost it all.

Nature since has been subject to disintegration, to disorder, to decay, and ultimately to death. That is the constant pattern of the created world and of all the creatures who live in it: disintegration, disorder, decay, death. However, there is a silver lining to all this, because as we've been learning here in the eighth chapter of Romans, nature in the future will be released from the divine curse when the church-age believers themselves are glorified and when they return with Jesus Christ to this earth to set up the thousand-year millennial kingdom.

At that point in time, there will be a great reversal in the curse of God upon nature. It will not be completely removed because there will still be people in their natural bodies. They will still be subject to the sin nature, and therefore, there will still be death present. But the things that cause a short lifespan, the things that cause a great deal of the suffering and death within the human race and within nature will all be removed so that the result will be a dramatic change that will take us very near back to the conditions that existed in the garden of Eden.

This morning, we begin at verse 22 of Romans 8 where the Apostle Paul says, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The word "for" is an introductory word. It looks like this in the Greek language: "gar." It introduces an explanation that he's going to give in verse 21. In verse 21, he pointed out that there's going to come a time when the people of God (believers) are going to enjoy the glory of full, personal liberty. And furthermore, creation will enjoy it along with them. And now he proceeds to give proof for the hope that nature will be delivered from its present ferocity, the infertility of the ground, for the decay and the death which are everywhere in nature.

"For ["Here's my reason," Paul says, "why I say that"] we know." The word "know" is this particular word in the Greek: "oida." This is a word for knowledge which we secure through learning something or through intuition. We have an intuition that has been based on various factors and we make a decision that's right on target. It's a bit of knowledge that we use that was intuitively within us formed by a variety of information sources that came to us. This is not the kind of knowledge that you get by practicing to do something.

Those of you who are going for the first time on the Berean youth club winter ski trip will have a little pamphlet that we will give you. And you'll read about it, and it will tell you about some of the basic techniques for skiing, and out of that, you will get an "oida" knowledge. That knowledge will be simply intellectual reading, examination, that kind of understanding. But that's not going to count for the real thing until you actually get out there on the slopes and you put those skis on and you start using that knowledge. Before very long, you will get a knowledge which is described by a different kind of Greek word, the word "ginosko," which is knowledge by experience. And by the end of the first day, the book knowledge will have been translated into personal, experiential knowledge.

Right now, Paul is saying, we all know something as common knowledge in the human race. We have this because we have acquired it through observation, through the observation of nature from which we have learned something. This word is in the perfect tense, which in the Greek, particularly on this word has a present meaning, so this is continually something that's known everywhere by mankind. It's active voice, which means that everybody personally understands this. It's indicative mood, a statement of fact. We understand that. The word "that" is the word "hoti," which introduces what is common knowledge. Something about the whole creation.

The word "whole" is an important word; it's the Greek word "pas," and it means "everything." It means it applies to everything within the world of nature. And again, we had the word that we've had several times for nature: "ktisis." This refers to the non-rational world of nature of plants and animals. Paul refers to a common knowledge which applies everywhere to the world of animals and plants and nature and the natural forces - something which all of us have observed and we're aware is out there. What is it that is common knowledge? Well, he says that it is common knowledge that all of nature is groaning.

"Sustenazo." "Sustenazo" refers to suffering which is due to God's curse on nature. It expresses a feeling of sorrow which is in nature. It is expressing that there is a continual groaning. It's an experience of nature to sigh. It's unceasing. It's universal because things are not right. There is an underlying condition of pain and suffering in nature, and it is experienced in the natural world, and of course it is also reflected in human beings.

In other words, there is no Shangri-La any place on the face of the earth, the Apostle Paul says. There is no perfect place where people do not grow old, where people do not suffer any breakdowns, where there is no disorder in the animal world, where there is nothing but peace and prosperity. No place on the face of the earth can that be found.

And the groaning that Paul refers to here by this word, that is, taking place, that sighing with sorrow on the part of nature is looking back to the Garden of Eden where all of that took place. But at the same time, while nature is "sustenazo"-ing, sighing as it looked back and regrets what happened in the Garden of Eden. How often if the animal world was rational and could think like man, how often the animal world would look back as man has and say, "I wish it hadn't happened. I wish they hadn't spoiled it. I wish they had left it the way it was."

But at the same time that they're doing that, Paul says nature is also doing something else. It is travailing in pain. This word looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the word "sunodino." It is actually two words put together. The first part is the preposition "sun" which means "with," and the second, the word "odino," is a verb which means "to have birth pangs." So, the word means "to suffer birth pangs together."

Nature's suffering is here compared to a woman who is in labor pains. It is in present tense so that nature is in constant birth pangs, and it is looking forward now to something, and that is to the second coming of Christ, which is the point of delivery. As a woman who is pregnant will be looking forward to that point nine months down the line which will be delivery date. So, this very word that applies to labors pangs and the delivery of a normal birth is used here to reflect what nature is looking forward to. It looks back with sorrow and sighing to the terrible thing that happened in Eden, but at the same time, it looks forward to a delivery date because as mothers know, when the delivery is completed, the pain is basically passed. And until the delivery is completed, the labor pangs will continue.

So, he's using this very apt analogy that in nature there is this constant birth pangs until the second coming. It is experienced by nature. It's a statement of fact. Now, all parts of nature are sharing this suffering of birth. It isn't that they suffer it with Christians that he's talking about here. He talks about that in the next verse, he just says, "Nature with itself everywhere is suffering this experience." Now, this suffering looks forward to the millennium when the delivery of creation will be free from God's curse and the pain will be ended. This condition which began in the Garden of Eden and which is continued, Paul says, until now. "Until now" means "up to this very day."

**Restored Fertility of Land in the Millennium**

The groaning of nature, however, is not the groaning of death pangs, but it is the groaning of birth pangs so that the ultimate result, Paul indicates, is going to be a happy one. Happy in what way? Well, the Bible gives us some previews about the happy results of this particular delivery. The product of nature's birth pangs in the millennium.

One of the things that the Bible tells us is that there is going to be fertility restored to the soil. This is one of the first things that God told Adam that from now on, the soil will not be fertile. It will not easily grow things for you. You will no longer have everything just at your disposal for the taking. You will have to sweat your brow off in order to get it.

Isaiah 32 beginning at verse 13 tells us that this is going to be changed. In describing the coming kingdom of Christ, Isaiah says, "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; Until [this degenerative condition of nature in society until] the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted as a forest."

So that the thorns and the briar patches are going to become fruitful fields. Furthermore, Isaiah says that in that millennial kingdom, the curse upon Adam's efforts will be removed so that when farmers make an effort, the result will be prosperous. Isaiah 35, the first two verses says, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom like the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

Now, you see, you cannot apply any of this to heaven, because heaven does not grow crops, and heaven does not fields, and heaven does not face thorns and thistles. And of course, this has never happened in the history of the world that this has been removed from the natural scene. Therefore, you have another indication that someplace down the line, God must plan to do something very tremendous to the earth itself. And the Bible makes it clear as we put together all the scriptures on that subject that that place has to be planet earth.

**Rainfall and Absence of Famine in the Millennium**

Another thing that this birth pang will result in a happy consequence is going to be that rain will fall in proper amounts. Water is the critical element to man's well-being. And the Bible says that in the millennium, rain will fall in proper amounts. It will fall at the right time, and it will fall in the right places, which means it's not going to fall and cause mudslides to kill people. It means that rain is not going to fall and cause enormous floods to destroy the crops and the efforts that people have put together and their houses and the construction and so on.

Ezekiel 34 beginning at verse 26 tells us about this. Ezekiel says, "And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in its season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bars of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that enslaved them."

Now, of course the Jewish people have never been freed from anybody's yolk. They are constantly looking over their shoulder because they are still under threat to this very day, but here's a time in history when Ezekiel says, "You will be free from your fears, and you will be living in great prosperity because I will give you what you need to be able to grow the crops in abundance that you would enjoy. I'll give you the rain."

Consequently, one of things that will not exist in the millennial kingdom is famine. Ezekiel 36 beginning at verse 29, we have reference to this. "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the grain, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the nations."

Now, obviously, God has never kept that promise. Now, either He's a God who tells us the truth and He keeps His Word or He isn't. You can't have it both ways. And there's never been a time in the history of the world when this kind of a scripture could be applied and say, "There is no place on any spot on the planet earth in any nation where there is famine. Every place, there is abundance of food." Now, you know how prominent famine is today.

You know that the Marxist philosophy is to create famine, to create misery for people who are under a non-socialist system so that they can come in and take over the country and take over the freedom of the people. By all means, be sure you take the handout with you today and read it in detail. What you will find, for example, is that many Americans think the desire, for example, to create the disinvestment in South Africa is being promoted in order to make life better for the black people of South Africa.

Now, those who are in the know smile at the naiveness of the average American who thinks that is really what they're doing. But the person who is the know understands that what Nelson Mandela and the ANC and the other Marxists of South Africa and the leftists of the United States are trying to do is to create misery for the people of South Africa. When we say that disinvestment is going to cost thousands of people their jobs and bring misery to the population of South Africa, the people who are promoting the disinvestment say, "We know! We don't want to tell the general public. That's exactly why we're doing it."

But Nelson Mandala, the terrorist who's been in jail for twenty years in South Africa, he's open. He's up-front with it. He says, "We want to create misery for the black population so that they will be willing to throw out the government that exists." He's just honest and open. He says, "We want to get rid of the government. The way we do it is to cause misery for the people, then the people foolishly think, 'Let's kill what we've got. Let's get rid of what we've got even though we don't know what we can get to replace it that will be better. We'll get rid of what we have.'" And if you know Marxist doctrine, if you know Communist doctrine, you know exactly where he learned that. It is a Marxist design to create misery for people, not to make things better so that they can bring the people under socialist control.

Well, you see, that's not going to be possible in the millennium. This is what Ezekiel says. Ezekiel says food will be so abundant no tyrant will be able to use the cries of the empty stomachs of children to propel parents to a political activity which will be to their own self-destruction. There will be plenty of food.

The wastelands will themselves become productive. In Isaiah 35:6-7, this is pointed out to us. Isaiah 35:6-7, "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." So that, here again, prosperous production of food because of the provision by God of ample rainfall.

**Revitalization of the Jordan Valley**

And one of the great miracle changes that will take place in the land of Palestine, the land that Israel occupies which we have a great deal of details about geographic changes within the country itself. One of them is that a miraculous stream will begin flowing from the vicinity of the temple in Jerusalem, and it will flow down toward the Jordan River and empty into the Dead Sea, and the Dead Sea will become the Living Sea.

Ezekiel 47 beginning at verse 1, "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house [and this is Ezekiel's picture of the future kingdom]; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward [the temple]: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar." And then he proceeds to tell how the water rose and gradually got higher and higher and higher until it was a wide river that he could not pass over.

Then, verse 6, "And he said unto me, 'Son of man, hast thou seen this?' Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. And said he unto me, 'These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the Araba [the Jordan valley of the Jordan River], and go into the sea [the Dead Sea]: and being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed."

Now, some of you may have had occasion to visit the Israel, and if you've ever swum in the Dead Sea. I have done that. I'll tell you, it is an experience that is no fun. The one thing you cannot do is to get water in your eyes which is almost impossible not to do, and that's - when that happens - that's when you become aware of why everything in that body of water is dead. The salt is absolutely unbelievable.

And because the salt content is so great, the buoyancy is enormous. It was the only body of water that I have ever been able to lie on my back with my feet and my hands sticking straight up and not sink straight down. Just floating on it like a cork because of the enormous buoyancy of the salt in the water. But there's no scuba diving, there's no going under, there's no getting it in your eyes, because you come up in considerable agony immediately. And yet, this water is going to flow in to make that sea a living body with living things in it once more and things growing around it.

Now, the Dead Sea is in the vicinity of the great mountain of Masada where the Jews faced off with the Roman tenth legion and made their final stand in the days following the final attack upon the nation of Israel in 70 A.D. when it was brought down by the Romans. And they withstood for something over a year the Roman legions at the bottom.

When you are at the top of Masada looking down, you get a very clear picture, you see the Dead Sea lying there - that long-shaped body of water, and around it, there is nothing but absolute desert. I mean, it is absolute desolation. It is one place you would not like to be lost in, because if you do lose your way out there, you are doomed. And if you look down from Masada, you can get a very clear picture of what a tremendous change is going to take place when suddenly all that becomes green. All that becomes fruitful. All that becomes a place of food. So that someplace in the future, this is going to happen.

I do not want to stress to you that that has not happened now. If you have any doubts, just take a trip over there and grab the cable car that takes you to the top of Masada, and it'll be very clear to you that that's not the case. Go ahead and go swimming in the Dead Sea, and you'll come up with the right answer in a hurry.

Verse 9, "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, wherever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come there: for they shall be healed [you see, the Dead Sea needs healing]; and every thing shall live where the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea [that is, the Mediterranean Sea], exceedingly many. But the miry places and the marishes shall not be healed; they shall be given for salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall its fruit be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and its fruit shall be for food, and its leaf for medicine."

Now there is to be medicinal use when that is necessary, the ample fruit, and you can't pick the trees clean. You pick, and it grows right back. You pick, and it grows right back. Now that's fertility. And every month, it's going to bring forth the fruit. Now, that doesn't mean that it's going to bring the fruit of the month (orange one time, apple the next time, bananas the next time). It's going to bring whatever the fruit tree is. That's what it's going to bring. And it will bring it; as you pluck it, it will grow right back so that there will never be any lack of food. It's always waiting there.

**Human Health, Fertility, and Longevity**

There will be a removal, a great decrease in the effect of disease and deformity for mankind. Now, we live in a world that is filled with potential illnesses which our body's immune system has to fight day and night. There will come a time when that will be stopped, that kind of terrible facing of illness and the most terrible kind when people succumb to something they can't control. When you have that experience having to be told that you have something that they have no way of healing, that you must be left on your own to survive or not to survive. And every day, doctors have to tell people that they are faced with that kind of a disastrous future. But, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He rules this earth, is going to perform the healings that are necessary through His various agencies and great preventive health measures so that disease will be diminished.

Isaiah 33:24 says, "And the inhabitant shall not say, 'I am sick:' the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquities." So, in the millennium, those who will be in their natural bodies and will naturally be going to work will not be able to get on the phone and say, "I'm calling in sick today," because the Lord is going to zap an angel there, and you is going to be healed - bingo!

Isaiah 35:5-6 add to this, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Now, this widespread health is obviously going to result in an extended lifespan. If disease is brought under control, if the immune system is maximized by proper diet and health procedures, people are going to live a long time.

Isaiah 65:22 says, "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for like the days of a tree are the days of my people." What their efforts produce, they will live to enjoy because they'll live a long time like trees. And he's referring to trees like redwood trees, these trees that go on for centuries. "And mine elect shall enjoy the work of their hands." So that lifespan will be no longer limited to the basic 70 years that it is today.

As a matter of fact, Isaiah 65:20 tells us that, "There shall be no more in it an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Which means that to die at the age of a hundred in the age of millennium is comparable to a child dying today, which means that people are going to live hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. And those that are here in their natural bodies are going to be highly fertile, having a considerable birth rate. As a matter of fact, the Bible explicitly says that that's what's going to happen during the millennial era.

It says that for Israel in Jeremiah 30. Jeremiah 30:19-20, "And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small [speaking here of the Jewish people in the millennium]. Their children also shall be as they were before, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them." Israel to be restored, and Israel to be made fertile in terms of childbearing.

This will also be true, the Bible tells us, relative to the Gentiles in the millennium. Ezekiel 47:22 points this out, "And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the aliens [the Gentiles] that sojourn among you, who shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel." That here, Gentile nations will also share in the blessings of the earth, and they too will be highly reproductive.

**Global Peace**

The other thing that's going to cause a population explosion is the fact that wars will be terminated. If you terminate wars, you save population. You save the people through the wars as well as their capacity to reproduce. And of course, you must appreciate the terrible consequences of war. What was it, something like 40 million people who were killed in World War II in one way or another? Now, that's a tremendous loss of human beings around the face of the earth plus the increase of population potential in those people.

But Isaiah 2:4 says, concerning the millennial condition, "And he shall judge among the nations [the Gentile nations], and shall rebuke many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Now, it would be utter nonsense, foolishness to suggest that this has something to do with heaven. You understand that that is the rebuttal that the amillennialists and the post-millennialists trying to bring, that this has nothing to do with earth but that all this has to do with heaven. Well, obviously, there is no such thing as war and learning to go to war in heaven, an earthly reference.

Micah 4:3 adds the same thing, "And he [that is the ruling Christ during the golden age] shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." And you know as well as I that that has never happened in the history of the world. Now, there is no peace possible upon the face of the earth as long as Satan is in charge. And it is Satan's world now, and consequently because he is in charge, war is inevitable.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, we read, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord." Now, remember the day of the Lord begins with the tribulation and then it goes into the millennium. ".the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night [suddenly, bingo, the tribulation is there]. For when they shall say, 'Peace and safety;' then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." When labor pains begin, you cannot escape them. You go through with it and until the delivery is accomplished. So, suddenly here comes the destruction that is upon them, and they will not be able to escape. When will this happen? Right when the nations of the world are yelling, "Peace and safety. We've secured that." And that's the cry that you're hearing today.

And you can get some real, real crazies out there in the suggestions that are being made. I read recently the latest concept of Jacques Cousteau, the famed underwater explorer who invented the scuba aqualung system of breathing underwater. He has declared that he will henceforth devote his life to one objective, and that is to get the nations of the world to agree to take all of the children between the ages of 7 and 8 years old from the capitalist nations and exchange them with the children from the communist nations during that period of their lives. So, everybody will exchange their children. The 7 to 8 year-olds will constantly be transferred back and forth. And, of course that, he says, will bring peace to the earth, because no one will want to be killing their own children.

Now, it is obvious that Jacques has stayed down too long on his aqualung one time. He is suffering from narcosis. He obviously came up faster than his bubbles, and so he's in real trouble with the flightiness of that kind of thinking.

But, the stinger in all that, the sleeper in all that, is that the Russians do not mind killing their own people. That's another thing that Americans can't get through their heads: the Russians do not mind killing Russians. They have done it to the extent of millions and millions of people. It is inherent in communism that you must kill your own people to rub out the bad attitudes toward socialism, because if you're against communism, you are mentally defective and you must be removed from the face of the earth. So, they wouldn't mind bombing even their own children.

But you see, this kind of desperation, even though the Bible says that there will be no peace in Satan's world. And therefore, you need a strong military establishment today to ensure peace. The United Nations, of course, is a farce, and it's a human viewpoint counterfeit of Satan. But the population explosion will be no problem in the environment of the millennium freed then from the curse of God.

**Freedom from Animal Danger and Natural Disasters**

The dangers from natural disasters and from animals will also be removed. That is one of the great promises in Hosea 2:18 where we read concerning the condition of them millennial earth, "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of the heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword [terminating war] and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." There will be a condition in the earth where danger will be removed.

Ezekiel 34:25 adds this, "And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." You will be able to sleep without fear of an animal coming upon you, a ferocious animal coming upon you and attacking you.

Today, if you're in grizzly country in the states out west in the high country, when you are camping in the out areas, you have to be very careful to concern yourself with the fact that there are grizzlies out there. And you do not dare get into your tent and come in there with some little Tostitos and some dips and some little refreshments in your tent and having a wonderful party. When you go to sleep, you make it your business to see that your food is outside and preferably hung in a tree.

I stood by my tent one time and watched a bear tear into my icebox that I had left outside propped against a tree. And later, you could see that scratch of that claw across the aluminum top of that icebox as he ripped it open to help himself to those tostadas and the dips and the other things that were in it. May his hair fall out.

But this in the millennium, there's not going to be that kind of stuff. You're not going to walk around being able to go down out hiking on a camping trip afraid to lie down at night for fear of what may happen from some wild animal that comes along. Isaiah 65:25 adds this, "'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's food [that's good news]. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,' saith the Lord." Snakes will no longer be eating on people.

**Prosperity on the Earth**

Furthermore, there will be general prosperity as a result of all of this. The birth pangs that creation looks forward to which will result in the millennial kingdom is that there will be an atmosphere of general prosperity everywhere on the face of the earth.

In the book of Amos 9:13-14, we have this indicated. Amos 9:13, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink their wine; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them."

Now, what does that sound like to you in terms of a restored earth that's giving great return to people who work, to people who make an effort. And please remember, there are two kinds of people. There will be we who are in our glorified bodies, bodies that have been freed from the sin nature, from time and space, from decay, deterioration, and death; we will be like the Lord is in His body. And there will also be people on the earth who came into the millennium as born again people who bore children, and they are in their natural lifestyle. They are marrying, giving in marriage, children being born, growing up, and doing all the things that goes on in life now but at a much more refined, effective level.

**The Economy in the Millennium**

Now, that's going to require some sort of an economic system surrounding all that. Now, you just read verse 14 and tell me what that sounds like to you. It is obviously private ownership capitalism which will be the divinely-ordained economic system. For what reason? Because the millennium is designed to be a time of maximum prosperity and to be a time of a high standard of living. So that they will build waste cities and they will inhabit them. Not someone else. They will plant vineyards, and they will drink the juice of that grape that they grew. They will make gardens, and they will eat the fruit of them.

You see, there is a scripture which in itself marks to you the gross sinfulness of a government that seeks to take from people the fruits of the labors. Indeed, the Bible forbids it. Everywhere in the scripture, there is only one system of economics that brings prosperity, and that is private ownership of property, free enterprise, the self-efforts, enjoying the fruits of your labors.

In Micah 4:4, we read, "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." Now, tell me what that sounds like. If you were going to sit under your own fig tree and nobody will make you afraid of enjoying the fig tree, it is obvious that you have private ownership of property to use as you choose.

There is furthermore the statement in Isaiah 65 that gives us a clue as to what kind of an economic system will be imposed by the Lord of Lords and King of Kings in the millennial era. Beginning at verse 21, "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for like the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands [not the work of someone else's hands]. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

It is very clear that even under the world government of Jesus Christ, socialism will be rejected as a bankrupt system. It will be rejected as a system that is unjust and unprofitable.

**Looking Forward to the Millennium**

So, you see, we're talking about God bringing something out of the chaos that exists in the world today. The curse upon nature, Paul says in Romans 8, is indeed going to be reversed. Now, we all know that there is this kind of decay and death in the natural world, and nature itself is sighing as it looks back at Eden and wishes it hadn't happened. But at the same time, it is like a woman who is giving birth to a child. She is in the process of those birth pains, and she knows that there is going to be a delivery of something that will then cause great joy and happiness.

And that is the condition of the earth now, and it will come into that expression of great joy and great happiness, great rejoicing when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and He puts the curse back off of creation. And He puts everything in the natural world back into basic order. And the result then will be the most fantastic golden age that the world has ever known. It will be the fulfillment of what every person on the face of the earth tried to figure out how to solve problems wants to see.

All of the efforts of the communists, all of the efforts of the socialists, all of their good dreams will be fulfilled. They make the mistake now of seeking good objectives by ways that are not God's order. But someday, the Lord Himself will come in, remove that curse, and all of this will become a great possibility.

And over it all, I remind you again, you must prepare yourself to be the agent of the living God who will administer this marvelous world.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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