



Creation's Lamentations & Labor Pains, Rom 8:22; "Phthora": Corruption & Decay; Geologic & Biblical Time Compared, Gen 1, 7-8; Perfection-Disorder Cycle

- 3) This definition is corroborated by Liddell and Scott in *A Greek-English Lexicon* and by Kittel and Friedrich in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.
- 4) Lament is defined by *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11th ed.): "to mourn aloud; to express sorrow, mourning, or regret; to cry out in grief." This demonstrable aspect of lament is described in some dictionaries as "sighing."
- 5) Both nature and mankind look back to the fall and the corruption and decay it initiated and lament the sin that caused it all. This is expressed metaphorically as "groaning" or sighing."
- 6) The present tense is static and indicates that the creation and mankind perpetually lament the fall until the Second Advent.
- 7) Both nature and man look forward to the liberation of the Second Advent when the sufferings of this time are over.
- 8) The present sufferings are compared to that of a pregnancy. The word that is translated "suffers the pains of childbirth" is yet another hapax legomenon, the present active indicative of the verb **συνωδίνω, sunōdinō**.
- 9) The present tense is customary and indicates that the circumstance of looking toward the deliverance of the Second Advent may be compared to the labor pains associated with childbirth.
- 10) The customary present also indicates that these pains will continue with increasing intensity until the "delivery" occurs at the Lord's Second Advent.
- 11) These two hapax legomina are used by Paul to illustrate the undeserved suffering that has been imposed on the environment by the fall of man.
- 12) Human volition is the cause of sin and sin is the cause of the suffering of the universe. Nature is designed by God to be the glory of man, therefore when man fell, nature also fell but it was undeserved.
- 13) The present corruption and decay will all come to an end when the Lord returns. All believers will be in glory and all nature will be restored to its pristine perfection.
- 14) Therefore, the first verse of this paragraph can now be appreciated:

Romans 8:18 - For I conclude that the sufferings of the present period of time are not comparable to the glory which is destined to be revealed to us.

- 1) The sufferings of the present period of time involve the corruption and decay of both the human body and the universe between the fall of Adam and the Second Advent of Christ.
- 2) The question arises: What form does this corruption and decay take? We get very definite guidance from the Greek word found in:

Romans 8:21 - Therefore the material universe itself shall be set free from slavery to corruption [φθορά *phthora*] into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

- 3) The Greek lexicons and dictionaries give us valuable information on this word:



Vine, W. E. *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 235:

PTHORA (φθορά), being brought into an inferior or worse condition. It is used physically of the condition of creation, Romans 8:21.

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. 2d ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 858:

φθορά, ruin, destruction, dissolution, deterioration, corruption.

1. In the world of nature ... coming into being and passing away.

Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1930:

φθορά, destruction, ruin, especially by some general visitation. B. passing out of existence, ceasing to be. 3. loss by deterioration.

Friedrick, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 9:93-105 passim:

In Philosophical Usage. Greek philosophy continually sought to understand [φθορά], corruption and decay in antithesis to [γίνωμαι], original creation. The question is that of what abides [the earth] in contrast to that which changes [things that are on the earth]. They have a fixed span which undergoes alteration. The concept of [corruption and decadence] is always defined by what abides and is immutable in the cosmos [the eternal]. The main concern of older Greek philosophy is to know this abiding element in the changing and perishing forms of nature.

Philo. φθορά is something whose cause does not lie in God, the eternal is not subject to corruptibility

Corruptible-Incorruptible. φθορά in Romans 8:21 is the "corruptibility" which must pass away as flesh and blood must also pass away.

1 Corinthians 15:50 - Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable [φθορά *phthora*: **corrupted and decayed**] inherit the imperishable [ἀφθαρσία *aphtharsia*: **incorrupt and eternal**].

- 4) These definitions along with our context in Romans 8:19-22 bring us to several conclusions:
 1. The earth was once in a status quo of perfection described in Scripture as the garden of Eden.
 2. This perfection was transformed into an ongoing process of corruption and decay at the point of Adam's original sin.
 3. This new process will be the universe's status quo until the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.
 4. At the Second Advent all believers of every dispensation will be in the status quo of ultimate sanctification, i.e., a body of incorruption with eternal life.
 5. This will enable the Lord to return the earth to its pristine perfection last enjoyed by our original parents in the garden of Eden.
- 5) From these definitions several propositions can be put forward in answer to the question, "What form does this corruption and decay take?"
 1. Since our Lord is perfect, He is not the Creator of anything imperfect, corruptible, or decadent.



2. Therefore, we conclude that the original creation as well as the restored earth following the Luciferian Rebellion was perfect, incorrupt, and free of decay.
3. The fact that our original parents had perfect life in perfect bodies indicates that the system in place in Eden was designed to maintain its perfect environment indefinitely.
4. The tree of life was available to maintain their physical perfection for as long as they remained in status quo perfection in their spiritual lives.
5. By the same token, as long as spiritual perfection was maintained by Adam and Ishah, natural perfection was maintained in the universe.
6. However, as soon as spiritual perfection was lost due to original sin it resulted in the fall of our original parents as well as the fall of their environment.
7. Adam and Ishah entered into the status quo of spiritual death manifest by the corruption of the sinful nature and the decay associated with the aging process of the body leading to physical death.
8. Simultaneously the perfect environment entered into the status quo of entropic death manifest by its involuntary slavery to corruption and involvement in ever-increasing disorder and decay.
9. Romans 8:21 instructs us that the universe is in τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς: **tes douleias tes phthoras**: “the slavery of corruption and decay.”
10. This “slavery of corruption and decay” currently encountered by the universe is the result of a curse imposed by the original Physicist, Jesus Christ, in the form of the second law of thermodynamics which is manifest by the principle of entropy or *phthoras*.