

Awaiting Our Unveiling

Vanity and Expectation



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now. Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the first-fruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the Sonship, the deliverance of our body (Romans 8:19-23, CV).

“**V**anity” is the lot of earthly man. Along with all creation, we have been subjected – against our will – to vanity. Man’s life is filled with futility, emptiness, barrenness, purposelessness and aimless frustration, because he has been subjected so by his Creator.

The Greek word translated “vanity” here is *mat-aiotēs*, and is defined by Joseph Thayer¹ as,

What is devoid of truth and appropriateness; perverseness, depravity, frailty, want [*i.e.*, lack] of vigor.

B.W. Johnson² defines it as,

Seeking without finding.

1. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.
2. *The People’s New Testament*.

The richness of this Greek word can be seen in the various ways it is translated in the following versions:

*aimless frustration*³
*spoiled*⁴
*frustrated*⁵
*imperfection*⁶
*folly*⁷
*failure and unreality*⁸
*futile*⁹
*weak*¹⁰
*imperfection*¹¹
*dissolution*¹²

So great and complete is creation's subjection to vanity that Solomon penned these words:

*Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities; **all is vanity.** What profit has a man of all his labor which he takes under the sun? (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3).*

Solomon here describes the state of daily, earthly life “*under the sun*” (a phrase found 29 times in Ecclesiastes). The next few verses go on to describe the seemingly endless cycle of human existence.

One generation passes away, and another generation comes: but the earth abides. The sun also arises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to his place where he arose. The wind goes toward the south, and turns about to the north; it whirls about continually, and the wind returns again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; to the place from where the rivers come, there they return again. All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing (Ecclesiastes 1:4-8).

Solomon sums up man's life and labor, saying that “all is vanity.” Yet for those who trust their Heavenly Father, quite another view prevails! Instead of being bound to such emptiness, they rise to heights of divine life. We are “*the sons of God.*” This is our approach to life. This is who we are. This is our God-given reality.

Solomon's perspective showed the vanity of the human viewpoint without God. Paul, the apostle, provides us with a perspective “far above all heavens” (Ephesians 4:10). It is from here – from the celestial viewpoint – that we know that “our labor is NOT IN VAIN in the Lord.”¹³

3. *An Understandable Version.*
4. *Bible in Worldwide English.*
5. *Goodspeed New Testament.*
6. *Montgomery New Testament.*
7. *The Riverside New Testament.*
8. *Weymouth.*
9. *Moffat New Testament.*
10. *New Life Study New Testament.*
11. *Centenary Translation.*
12. *The Original New Testament.*
13. I Corinthians 15:58.

SAVED FROM VANITY

Those of us who know Father as the great Placer and Subjecter, the detailed Planner and Director of our days, have a completely different approach to the entire unfolding of every minute of our day.

We greet each day with the joy and excitement of knowing that *it* is His, and that we are His as well. The vain uncertainties of the “What if ...” viewpoint are divinely transformed into the eager anticipation of seeing what God has planned for the day. We are able to awaken to the thrill of knowing that we will be witnesses of the unfolding of His detailed plan and purpose for our day. His presence presses in on our minds. There is a waking up to peace and joy as we know that our life, with all of its daily circumstances, is firmly in His hand and carried out by His capable direction. Our hearts are able to say, “Today we are on the great adventure of faith!”

We close each day with the surety and confidence of knowing that all of the details of this day were the will of God. The vain “What if ...” reflections of its happenings are transformed into a place of peace and rest – knowing that the will of God was done, and who could have prevented it? The realization of our divine appointment settles within our hearts and minds. After all, *He* is the Lord of life, the Captain of the ship, the Master of destiny. Daniel the prophet wrote that,

*God does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can prevent His hand.*¹⁴

We have the joy of waking up each morning as His *clay* (Romans 9:21).

We have the anticipation of living each day as His *handiwork* (Isaiah 64:8).

We have the rest of laying our heads on our pillow each night as His *achievement* (Ephesians 2:10).

CONFIDENT EXPECTATION

It is because of a confident expectation that we are saved from the vanity of the sons of Adam – living daily in our sonship position in Christ.

We *are* God’s sons. Those around us are unaware of this astonishing fact. We did not have a royal motorcade escorting us to our workplace this morning. Those who were in the elevator with us this afternoon were unaware that we co-own the universe. We were not ushered to the front of the checkout line this evening at the grocery store. Our neighbors know nothing of our true identity. Even if we tell them, they would not understand. It is hidden from their eyes.

Those who are irritated and confused, troubled and depressed from the vanity of being a descendant of Adam will be short and irritable with us. In their frustration with the endless cycle of vanity they will often be hurtful, mean and vindictive. None of this is true of who we are. We have a life full of meaning and purpose, joy and peace, because we are descendants of the one true and living God.

14. Daniel 4:35.

We are the people of hope on the planet. We have as our birthright as the sons of God the blessed fruit of His Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (self-control). However, when we join the descendants of Adam in their misery-ways, we practically deny all that God has made us – the real us. We need to remember to walk through this dark world as the “*children of light*.”

*You were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: **walk as children of light**: for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth* (Ephesians 5:8-9).

*You are all **the children of light**, and **the children of the day**: we are not of the night, nor of darkness* (I Thessalonians 5:5).

We do not walk in the darkness. We walk in the light of all that we have and are in Christ! To murmur and complain is, in all reality, to live as though we do not believe these truths. Walking in this light of who we are is what it means to walk in His Spirit. After teaching us the fruit of the Spirit, Paul says,

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

Living the fruit of His Spirit is walking in the Spirit. It is not an *effort* – *trying* to work up this fruit in our lives. Instead it is *fruit* – the byproduct of *His life* flowing through us. It is His produce.

OUR EARNEST EXPECTATION

The earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God (Romans 8:19).

Let us notice some of the particulars of this passage.

- **We are not yet manifest as the sons of God** (e.g. I John 3:2).

The world does not yet know who we are. Our sonship is completely hidden from them at this time.

- **Not only have we been subjected to “vanity,” but we have also been subjected to “expectation”** (e.g. Romans 8:20).
- **One day we shall be made manifest** (e.g. Colossians 3:4).

In the resurrection, God will reveal to creation who His sons are. This will be a glorious coronation day.

- **Creation awaits our manifestation** (e.g. Romans 8:19).

The whole creation groans and is eagerly awaiting redemption. They do not know about, nor

understand this deliverance, but it is to be found in our manifestation. What a glorious day this fulfillment will be for *all* of creation.

Until our manifestation is made, the rest of God's creation does not know who we are. As we walk through the circumstances of our days, they will *not* reflect our true identity. In fact, we shall not be exempt from all of the apparent vanities of this *darkland*. We shall have our share of the *dark-side*: suffering, pain, discouragement, difficulties, weariness, pressure and the like. Yet, we are not defined by their details, and although we are beckoned to the contrary on every side, we have a higher life – the *highlife* from above, from the *lightland*. We are called to walk in this radiant light of who Father has made us.

As we go through the various details of this earthly life, let us not forget who we really are. Let us remember our divine calling and position as God's Own sons. Let that be our day-by-day, moment-by-moment focus. Let us hold forth the Word of life, so that we can see clearly who we are and how we are to walk as honorable sons of God.

Ours is "*the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 3:14).

In the midst of apparent vanity we have the confident expectation of our manifestation. For now, we patiently await our unveiling (Romans 8:25).

Taken from the *Bible Student's Notebook*[™], a weekly Bible study publication available in two formats (electronic and printed)

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Study Shelf, PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963
1-800-784-6010 / www.StudyShelf.com

B I B L E S T U D E N T ' S P R E S S [™]
W i n d b e r , P e n n s y l v a n i a

