



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends,



All these are the beginning of sorrows.
Matthew 24:8



Jesus is referring to the rising tide of violent trouble in the earth that eventually leads to the birth of a new age at His return. The statement by itself doesn't seem to offer much solace. Sorrow is to begin and then bring more and more, increasing in weight and frequency. When all the warnings of the New Testament concerning these sorrows are taken together, it is clear that what is true on the international, ecological, and political scene is also true for individuals. There will be a rising tide of evil, suffering, and violence in personal lives as well as corporately. (II Timothy 3:1) In fact, from the human standpoint, there is no such thing as corporate sorrows. Everyone who is caught in such times encounters suffering quite individually. God has promised (that is, promised us and warned the world) that **EVERY THING THAT CAN BE SHAKEN WILL BE** (Hebrews 12:25-28).

The purpose of this shaking is so that only that which is worthy of standing may be found still standing. Then he explains what that is: **we receive a Kingdom which cannot be shaken**. So this shaking has begun in earnest, and will continue until everything in our lives and in the whole world is either under His unshakable Kingdom or is dust. I am thankful for God's faithfulness in shaking away all in me and around me that is not willing to bow to His rule. I know what comes from choosing my own way instead of bowing to Him: a hardness of heart that shatters to dust when shaken. It bears its own punishment. For those without God these events truly are sorrows. The sorrow of the world which leads to death is what is left for those married to this world. (Revelation 18) But for those who have humbled themselves under the grace of God, the word *sorrows* has another meaning. This word is really the term for *birth pangs*. Jesus described the struggle of childbirth as a time of sorrow that precedes a greater time of rejoicing. Once the birth is complete, rejoicing overcomes the memory of the painful struggle. (John 16:21)

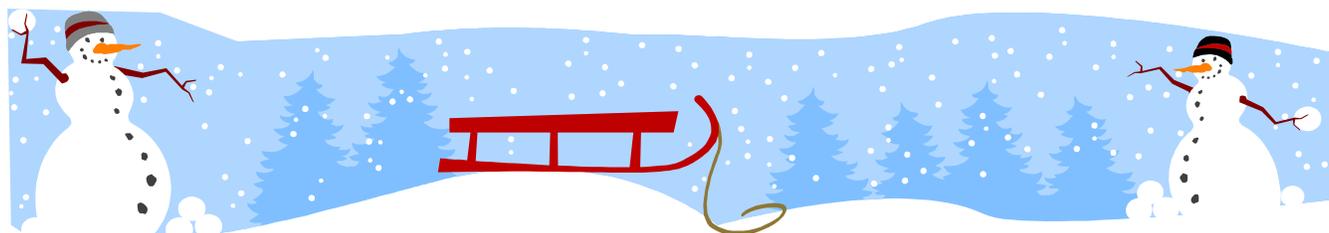
Paul says that he considers the struggles of this present world to not even be worthy of comparison to the glory that will be the result of the birthing process. Then he describes the groaning of the whole earth as *it* travails with birth pangs longing for the New Age to crash in. Finally he says that each of us also groans in the same way for the same thing. (Romans 8:19-23) To be *human* means to be *of the earth (humus)*. In some Scriptures, those *of the earth* refer to those who love what is merely physical. The fallen earth is all they know or want to know. But to be truly human is to love the earth as God loves it and to long to see it restored to its original goodness. **The meek shall inherit the earth.** (Matthew 5:5) The evil that burdens it and us shall be cut off forever. (Psalm 37:9-11) Until then, the earth groans and we groan. We do not groan on behalf of the world's evil systems which burden the earth. We groan because of them. We are against the world system for the sake of the lost in the world. (I John 2:15) We groan for the evil in the world to pass away. We groan for all the people in the world to come to God. (John 3:16) We groan for the **earth to be filled with the**

knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14) And we groan over our own personal and relational sorrows that affect our piece of earth and our peace in the earth.

The amazing message of the Incarnation is that God is as concerned for your private groaning as He is for the groaning of the whole earth, even the whole cosmos! For it is every created thing in the entire cosmos that is groaning for the one planet in rebellion to be put right. We are the theater of the universe. And you are more precious and important to its Creator than it is. FAR, FAR more PRECIOUS! For when it has been folded up like a garment and replaced with its eternal manifestation, you will still be the *you* you are now, also perfected, but still you, precious to God just as you are in your humanity. So remember that nothing you face is hopeless. No detail will go unredeemed. Your groans are participating in moving us all towards The Event the whole universe is groaning for. You are far more precious than sparrows or.... *galaxies*.



Happy New Year!





Movie Review



Voyage of the Dawn Treader

When Mary and I exited after seeing *Prince Caspian*, I made it to the far end of the semi-deserted hallway before an eruption of tears hit me. I felt that what I had warned would happen, had certainly happened to the Narnia stories. I had warned (hoping to be wrong) that the stories would be high in production quality, moderate in intact spiritual reality, but possibly give place to an encroaching secular mishandling of the entire spirit of Lewis' intention.

The first film seemed basically good (though I still had some problems with unnecessary liberties). *Prince Caspian* made me ill. So I had little anticipation for *Dawn Treader*. I was pleasantly surprised in some ways; disappointed in others. Space will not allow me to enumerate either in detail. So I will close with this warning and appeal...

Unless there is some godly intervention that preserves the heart of the Narnia films, at best they will be a dim reflection of a bright light, and worse, a false light.

If you must see the films then do so. But please know that after seeing them you do not yet know the stories of Narnia, and you WON'T until you go there yourself - through the doorway of the written words by C.S. Lewis. And be sure and reread the books after viewing the films to anchor your imagination once more in the true story.





Closing Thoughts...from Mary

Clay left this section for me to write this month. Usually, words flow easily for me when he does this, but not tonight. I have sat here at my desk quiet, listening, praying. Many of you and your prayer requests come to mind. And I wait, but my heart is now turned to intercession. It is an intercession of a different kind. It is a prayer of waiting beside you, with you, before the throne of our loving Father God. Oswald Chambers says "...the one who says 'I don't know why you are going through this, it is black and desperate, but I will wait with you' is an unspeakable benediction..."

My prayer is that I become that benediction as I wait with you before Him. You are all dearly loved and appreciated more than we can express. It is a joy to receive your prayer requests. Keep them coming! May your New Year be blessed!

*Love,
Clay & Mary*



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