

Creation (Gk. 'ktisis') in Romans 8

Edward E. Stevens – Feb 12, 2021

There are four different forms of the Greek root word KTISIS (creature, creation, create, creator, etc.) which are used in the New Testament. And there are 39 occurrences of those words in 35 different verses. Here is the list of all 35 verses which use at least one of those four forms of KTISIS. *Some verses have two uses of the word:

Matt. 19:4 And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who **created** *them* from the beginning made them male and female,

Mark 10:6 “But from the **beginning of creation**, *God* made them male and female.

***Mark 13:19** “For those days will be a *time of tribulation* such as has not occurred since the **beginning of the creation** which God **created** until now, and never will.

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to **all creation**.

Rom. 1:20 For since the **creation [verb, ktiseos] of the world** His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through **what has been made**, so that they are without excuse.

***Rom. 1:25** For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served **the creature** [created thing, *ktisei*] rather than the **Creator**, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Rom. 8:19 For the anxious longing of **the creation** [*ktiseos*, noun] waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

Rom. 8:20 For **the creation** [*ktisis*, noun] was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

Rom. 8:21 that **the creation** [*ktisis*, noun] itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Rom. 8:22 For we know that **all creation** [*ktisis*, noun] groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

Rom. 8:39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other **created thing** [*ktisis*, noun], will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1Cor. 11:9 for indeed man was not **created** [*ektisthe*] for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.

2Cor. 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is a* **new creature** [*ktisis*]; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Gal. 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation** [*ktisis*].

Eph. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, **created** [*ktisthentes*] in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Eph. 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might **make** [*ktise*] the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,

Eph. 3:9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who **created** [*ktisanti*] all things;

Eph. 4:24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been **created** [*ktisthenta*] in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Col. 1:15 ¶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of **all creation**.

***Col. 1:16** For by Him all things were **created**, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been **created** through Him and for Him.

Col. 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed **in all creation under heaven**, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Col. 3:10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who **created** him —

1Tim. 4:3 *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods which God has **created** to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

1Tim. 4:4 For everything **created** by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;

Heb. 4:13 And there is no **creature** hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Heb. 9:11 But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, **not of this creation**;

James 1:18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits **among His creatures**.

1Pet. 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human **institution [creation]**, whether to a king as the one in authority,

1Pet. 4:19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful **Creator** in doing what is right.

2Pet. 3:4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the **beginning of creation**."

Rev. 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the **Beginning of the creation of God**, says this:

***Rev. 4:11** "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You **created all things**, and because of Your will they existed, and were **created**."

Rev. 5:13 And every **created** thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

Rev. 8:9 and a third of the **creatures** which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Rev. 10:6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who **created** heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there will be delay no longer.

Apostle Paul is obviously the most prolific user of this word in its various forms, but Jesus, James, Peter, and John also use it. The first step in study of any word is to see how it is used by various authors in its original context. We need to compare Jesus' usage to Paul's and the others, to see if there are any differences in the way each of them defines the word. The context usually determines the meaning of the word. The above quotes are from the NAS95. We should check other translations to see how they render the word KTISIS.

KTISIS Usage in Romans 8

Rom. 8:19 For the anxious longing of **the creation** [*ktiseos*, noun] waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

Rom. 8:20 For **the creation** [*ktisis*, noun] was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

Rom. 8:21 that **the creation** [*ktisis*, noun] itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Rom. 8:22 For we know that **all creation** [*ktisis*, noun] groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

Rom. 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our adoption as sons*, the **redemption of our body**.

The challenge is for us to determine the meaning of the word “creation” (KTISIS) that is used here in Romans 8:19-22. There seems to be at least three possible meanings:

1. the **whole created universe** (human, animate and inanimate, seen and unseen)
2. the **human creation only** (humanity) or some sub-set of humanity (**the elect**)
3. the **old creation** passed away and was superseded by the **new creation**

Note that the “creation” would gain the following benefits at the Parousia:

- Rom 8:19 – *God’s true sons* would be revealed
- Rom 8:20 – set free from its subjection to futility
- Rom 8:21 – set free from its slavery to corruption, and given the glorious freedom that belongs to *God’s children*
- Rom 8:22 – would be re-born or re-created as God’s children
- Rom 8:23 – those who had the first-fruits of the Spirit would receive the *adoption as sons*, and the *redemption of their bodies* (bodily change)

From the Fall of Adam (Gen 3) onward, it does seem that the **whole created universe** was *subjected to futility* and *enslaved to corruption* in some sense because of Adam’s sin (thorns and thistles, increased pain in childbirth, etc.). The Dispensationalists apply that definition of the creation here in Romans 8. That is why they think that the **whole created universe** (rocks, trees, animals, insects) has to be restored to a Paradise on earth, and that the physical creation (animate and inanimate) will share in the benefits of that *regeneration* (recreation, rebirth, renewal). But as we will see below, that does not fit the context of Romans 8, especially from a Preterist perspective.

Furthermore, as we see in the above list of benefits, those **elect saints who remained alive until the Parousia**, who had the first-fruits of the Spirit, were the ones who benefited from the *revealing, set free, gaining freedom, re-birth or re-creation, adoption as sons*, and *redemption of their bodies*. Most of the benefits listed above (bodily change and catching up) would **only apply** to the elect saints, both those who were dead and those who remained alive until the Parousia. So it seems certain that **the elect** were included in the meaning of the word KTISIS. And it does not seem that the animals, rocks, and trees got those spiritual benefits that are listed above.

“All the Creation”

πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις – Romans 8:22

By Edward E. Stevens

Rom. 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. (NAS95)

Rom. 8:22 for we have known that all the creation does groan together, and does travail in pain together till now. (Young's Literal Translation)

Rom. 8:22 for we have known that all the creation groans with [us] and suffers with [us] until the present [time]. (Ed's Literal Translation)

We need to note up front that neither the UBS Textual Commentary, nor Hodges & Farstad's Majority Text, show any textual variants for this verse.

Key Question: What is the "creation" that Paul mentions here in Rom. 8:22?

Lexical Definitions of "KTISIS"

TDNT (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament) on "KTISIS"

The NT makes a distinction between what is made with hands and the place of God's presence (Heb. 9:11, 24), or between what is in the flesh and what is in the spirit (Eph. 2:11), or between the transitoriness of this world and the eternity of the world to come (Heb. 1:12). Heaven is used both for God's dwelling and for a part of this world. Similarly, the angels are creatures but do not belong to this creation (cf. the song in Rev. 5:8ff. with its widening circles). Nor does Satan belong to this creation. This creation, according to Rom. 8:19-20, is that which, in some connection with the human fall, is subject to decay, revolving in a gigantic circle of futility. The futility takes the form of temporality which offers both space for repentance and the possibility of offense. Creation displays God's deity but it also tempts us as cosmos. It is the place of revelation but its form is that of the flesh, so that only in Christ can one truly see God in nature. In and for itself the revelation in nature leads on ineluctably to the exposition of human guilt (Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:19-20). In Rev. 5 only the Lamb can open the sealed book which contains God's will for the world. This implies that the world lies in Satan's power and that the Lamb has freed it. The opening of the book means a new heaven and earth when the orders imposed with time and space will be lifted (cf. Mk. 12:25; 1 Cor. 15:26, 42ff.). As the world was created in Christ (1 Cor. 8:6), so its meaning lies in its redemption through him. All God's counsel is epitomized in him (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20). The form of this world is determined by the fall of humanity but also by its calling to glory. In it we have all that we need, and since all that is necessary to life is good (Mk. 7:14ff.; Rom. 14:14; 1 Cor. 7ff.), we are to use it with thanksgiving to God (1 Tim. 4:4), neither honoring the creature instead of the Creator nor dishonoring the Creator by rejecting or despising the creature.

4. *Humanity as Creature and New Creation.* Humanity is creation's goal, yet also the starting point of evil. The human creature is a living being (1 Cor. 15:45), and its natural life involves the tension of a being in God's image that is accompanied by subjection to sinful impulses. As God's creatures, people have no claim on God. They belong to this creation, with *psuchē*, not *pneuēma*, as their life's principle. With the gospel there is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; cf. Eph. 2:10, 15; 4:24; Col. 3:10). This is creation by the Word and Spirit (cf. Jas. 1:18) to new life in the Spirit (Rom. 6:1ff.). The entry of the Spirit through Christ's word and work (Mt. 12:28) means that the new aeon breaks into the course of this aeon in a creative work of God which unites divided humanity into one new humanity (Eph. 2:15). The goal is the totally new creation, the new heaven and earth, in which death will be abolished, Christ will be fully manifested as the pneumatic man, and the glorious liberty of God's children will be fulfilled with the redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23).

BDAG lexicon has three main definitions:

1. **[verb] act of creating, creation of something** ... since the creation of the world Rom 1:20. The Son of God was *counselor to the Father in his creative work* Hermas Similitudes 89.2.
2. **[noun] the result of a creative act, that which is created.**
 - a. of individual things or beings created, *creature, created thing* – the gospel ... which has been preached to every *creature* (here **limited to human beings**) Col 1:23. ... The Christian is described by Paul as *a new creature* 2Cor 5:17, and the state of being in the new faith by the same words as *a new creation* Gal 6:15.
 - b. the sum total of everything created, *creation, world* – from the beginning of the *world* Mk 13:19; 2 Pt 3:4. Likewise Mk 10:6; *the whole creation* (Ps 104:21). ... *the Son of God is older than all his creation* Hs 9, 12, 2. **limited to humankind in Mk 16:15.** *this world* (earthly in contrast to heavenly) Heb 9:11. *the creation, what was created* in contrast to the Creator, Rom 1:25; Rev 3:14. The meaning of *κτίσις* is in dispute in **Rom 8:19–22**, though the passive form is usually taken to mean the waiting of the whole creation below the human level, animate and inanimate ...
3. **system of established authority that is the result of some founding action, governance system, authority system.** ... the act by which an authoritative or governmental body is created. Somewhat comparable, of the founding of a city. ...the result of the act, *the institution* or *authority* itself 1 Pet 2:13. ... can have both meanings: 1. lawgiving, legislation; 2. the result of an action, i.e. law.) To a Hellene a well-ordered society was primary (s. Aristot., Pol. 1, 1, 1, 1252). It was understood that the function of government was to maintain such a society, and the moral objective described in vs. 14 is in keeping with this goal.

[Notes from Ed] The phrase (“all the creation”) is found only in four NT texts (Mark 16:15; Rom. 8:22; Col. 1:15 Col. 1:23), and appears to be “limited to humankind,” and not animals, rocks, and trees. Here are the four texts:

- Mark 16:15** And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to **all creation**.
Rom. 8:22 For we know that **the whole creation** groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of **all creation**.

Col. 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in **all creation** under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

The above lexical info comes from some of the best Greek scholars in the world saying that the meaning of KTISIS in Rom. 8:19-22 "is in dispute." However, they had just stated that the same phrase used in both **Mark 16:15** and **Col 1:23** is "**limited to humankind**" or "**limited to human beings.**"

The Phrase "all the creation"

A note about the usage of this phrase ("all the creation") in **Mark 16:15** -- Unless we want to affirm the position that Christ commanded his twelve disciples to preach the gospel to not only all humans, but to all the rocks, trees, animals and insects as well, then perhaps we need to see that the phrase can be (and is) used as a reference only to the "human" creation in some texts. That it can also refer to the physical universe or the physical realm (versus the spiritual realm) is not disputed. All that needs to be established here is that this phrase IS used in at least two NT texts with the limited meaning of only the human creation. Both Mark 16:15 and Col. 1:23 show this. Notice that Paul in **Col. 1:23** says that the gospel had been (past tense) proclaimed "in all creation" by the time he wrote to the Colossians (62-63 AD). Since he uses this same phrase found in Mark 16:15 about Christ commanding the twelve to preach the gospel to "all the creation," the implication is that the great commission had pretty much been completed by the time Paul was imprisoned in Rome (AD 61-63). Paul was NOT saying that he had preached to every rock, tree, animal and insect. Instead, he was obviously talking about "humankind" only.

Back to **Rom. 8:19-22** -- If Rom. 8:22 is talking about all humanity or some subset of humanity (past and present, "until now") groaning and suffering in bondage to Satan in Hadean captivity, then it would make sense that they were *about to be* (Gr. "mello") delivered from that bondage to corruption and captivity by the **resurrection of the dead** out of Hades and the **change of the living** at the rapture when Christ came (parousia) to redeem his own out of Hades (and out of the world) to be with Him in His heavenly kingdom.

[NOTE FROM ED] Food for thought: The view which suggests that Rom 8:19-22 is referring to the **whole created universe** (human and angelic, animate and inanimate, both seen and unseen realms) is unacceptable for us **preterists**. If the whole physical universe was radically changed and fully restored to its pre-Fall condition **at the Parousia**, then we should see the **Garden of Eden** and the **Tree of Life** back on earth again. We should have our immortal bodies now, and sinless perfection now, and dwelling in our heavenly dwelling places now. However, even though those things did arrive at the Parousia in AD 70, they are not here on earth. They are in heaven, and we have to go to heaven in order to experience those benefits.

Here on earth there are still thorns and thistles, and increased pain in childbirth, and the other consequences of sin to deal with in this physical life in this world. That suggests that the physical universe was NOT the "creation" that was changed at the Parousia. It points instead to a different kind of redemption: *rescued from our subjection to futility and our spiritual slavery to*

corruption (in the afterlife). When the dead saints were raised out of Hades, and the living saints were changed without having to experience physical death, and both groups were caught up together to be with Christ forever afterwards – **THAT was the redemption of God’s human creation**. They were taken to heaven where they live forever in their new immortal bodies. Jesus purchased our redemption from Satan’s control by His physical death on the Cross. Satan and his angels (Death and Hades) were robbed of their victims and prisoners. Jesus has the keys to Death and Hades. *We have been redeemed* – **NOT from thorns and thistles, or childbirth pain, or physical death** – *but rather from the eternal spiritual consequences of sin and the Second Death*. We are no longer subject to captivity in Hades, nor to eternal separation in the Second Death (the Lake of Fire). The Cross and the Parousia redeemed us saints (the elect) from all of that.

That is the **redemption** that all past generations of elect saints in Hades anxiously awaited and groaned for. It has now been provided by Christ on the Cross and at His Parousia. If we have that kind of redemption now, then nothing else matters. There is no other kind of redemption that is better or greater. We have it all in Christ. The **old creation** passed away, and the **New Creation** in Christ has now fully arrived. Praise the Lord for His Great Salvation and Eternal Life in His Glorious Presence!