

The Hope of Creation: The Significance of ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι (Rom 8.20c) in Context

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This paper explores the meaning of ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι in Rom 8.20c. This phrase has been variously understood as denoting a hope exercised by the one who subjected creation or a hope inhering in creation despite its subjection. After surveying and evaluating the standard proposals, I argue for an alternative manner of punctuating vv. 19–21 that makes it possible to preserve the most common meaning of ἐπί with the dative, while also taking creation itself as the agent that acts ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι. This proposal obviates a number of difficulties with conventional readings, and highlights the parallels between Paul’s statements about the hope of creation in vv. 19–21 and the hope of believers in vv. 24–5.

Keywords: Paul, Romans 8.18–25, creation, hope

Introduction

Romans 8.18–25 has justly been recognised as a crucial passage for understanding Paul’s views concerning the present condition and eschatological hope of creation, and, indeed, as a climactic point of the entire epistle.¹ Yet widespread acknowledgement of the passage’s significance has not birthed consensus regarding its interpretation, as a number of questions concerning vv. 19–20 in particular continue to generate lively scholarly debate. Among these, we may particularly note the following:

- What does Paul mean by κτίσις? Is he thinking of the totality of creation (including humanity) or of the non-human creation?
- What does Paul mean by the assertion that creation was subjected to futility οὐκ ἐκοῦσα?
- Is the agent who subjected creation to futility God or Adam?
- What is the nature of the grammatical and logical connections between the phrase ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι and what precedes it? Does Paul have in view a hope that

¹ E.g. J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (2 vols.; WBC 38a–b; Dallas: Word, 1988) 1.466–7; H. A. Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8.19–22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (LNTS 336; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 1.

was exercised by the one who subjected creation, or a hope that remains present within creation despite its subjection?

My particular concern in this paper is to offer a fresh proposal concerning the last of these issues, the significance of the prepositional phrase ἐφ' ἐλπίδι (typically rendered 'in hope') in 8.20c.² However, owing to the numerous contested elements of these verses and the way in which one's judgement concerning any one interpretative quandary necessarily impinges on one's conclusions regarding the others, it will be necessary to preface my discussion of this phrase by working through the preceding material in 8.18–20b in some detail. Having laid this foundation, I will proceed to survey the various ways in which ἐφ' ἐλπίδι in 8.20c has conventionally been construed. Finally, I will argue for an alternative manner of punctuating vv. 19–21 that makes it easier to recognise creation itself as the agent that acts ἐφ' ἐλπίδι. The reading I will propose obviates a number of difficulties that arise on the view that it is God who acts ἐφ' ἐλπίδι, while also creating a closer connection between Paul's statements about the hope of creation in vv. 19–21 and the hope of believers in vv. 24–5.

1. Romans 8.18–20b: Presuppositions and Preliminary Questions

In Rom 8.1–17, Paul offers an extended description of the situation that now obtains for those who are 'in Christ Jesus' (8.1): they have been freed from the law of sin and death (8.2), walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (8.4), set their minds on the things of the Spirit (8.5), are not 'in the flesh', but are indwelt by the Spirit (8.9; cf. 8.11), are led by the Spirit and thereby identified as 'children of God' (υἱοὶ θεοῦ, 8.14; cf. τέκνα θεοῦ in 8.16–17) who have received a 'spirit of adoption' (πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας, 8.16), and are indeed not only children of God but also 'heirs of God and coheirs with Christ' (8.17), inasmuch as they currently share in his suffering in order that they might also share in his glory.

The apostle then opines in v. 18 that the suffering that God's children and heirs presently undergo in solidarity with Christ pales in comparison to 'the glory that is going to be revealed εἰς ἡμᾶς'. In context, the ἡμᾶς seems to refer to believers, those whose standing 'in Christ' the apostle has highlighted in 8.1–17 (cf. ἡμῖν in 8.4). As for the preposition εἰς, I am persuaded by the contention of Susan Eastman that it here likely conveys not merely the directional sense 'to', but also the locative sense 'in'. As she explains, "in" because those who are presently

2 It may be noted at this point that the form ἐφ' ἐλπίδι (found in P⁴⁶ & B* D* F G) results from an unusual shift in aspiration whereby the breathing mark on ἐλπίδι becomes rough and the *pi* of the preposition aspirates to *phi*. All other occurrences of the phrase in the LXX and NT have the more usual form ἐπ' ἐλπίδι, which appears in Rom 8.20 in e.g. P²⁷ A B² C D².

led by the Spirit will reveal the glory of God in their transformed bodies, and “to” because they themselves have yet to see all that the glory of God entails’.³ Stated differently, the glorified children of God will serve as a conduit through which God’s glory, having been bestowed upon them, is made manifest.

Verse 19 makes clear that this manifestation of glory on the part of believers has profound implications for the rest of the created order, for, ‘the earnest expectation of creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God’ (ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαραδοκία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται).⁴ While some have argued that κτίσις refers throughout this passage to the totality of God’s created works (human and non-human),⁵ three factors persuade me that Paul intends κτίσις as a reference to the non-human creation in distinction from believing humanity:⁶ (1) the statement in 8.19 that the creation’s eager anticipation is directed towards the revelation of the children

3 S. Eastman, ‘Whose Apocalypse? The Identity of the Sons of God in Romans 8:19,’ *JBL* 121 (2002) 265 n. 3. For a similar argument, see A. Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18–30: ‘Suffering Does Not Thwart the Future Glory’* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999) 127–8.

4 On the meaning of ἀποκαραδοκία (of which this verse and Phil 1.20 provide the earliest extant examples) as ‘earnest, confident expectation,’ see D. R. Denton, ‘Ἀποκαραδοκία,’ *ZNW* 73 (1982) 138–40. It is illegitimate to appeal to Paul’s application of this language of longing to creation as a grounds for insisting that κτίσις here must refer purely to humanity (as does Adolf Schlatter, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit: Ein Kommentar zum Römerbrief* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1959³) 274), since the personification of the natural world is a persistent feature of Jewish and early Christian literature (e.g. 1 Chr 16.31; Ps 96.11; 97.1; Jer 4.28; 12.4; 50.46; Joel 1.10; Hab 2.11; Luke 19.40; Rev 12.12; 4 Ezra 10.9; for numerous references in Jewish apocalyptic texts see Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 97–152).

5 For arguments in favour of the view that κτίσις here includes humanity, see J. G. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption: A Study in Pauline Theology* (NovTSup 16; Leiden: Brill, 1971) 40; E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 232–3; Eastman, ‘Whose Apocalypse’, 273–6; B. R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 53–5; A. J. Hultgren, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 321. This view is often supported by appeal to Paul’s use of the phrase ‘all creation’ (πάντα ἢ κτίσις) in 8.22, which is taken as an all-encompassing reference to the totality of God’s created works, including humanity. There is, however, evidence in the LXX and NT that constructions in which πᾶς modifies κτίσις ‘can be less than comprehensive, when a particular class of creature is in focus in the context’ (Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 179). Thus, in Tobit 8.15 πᾶσαι αἱ κτίσεις σου may well mean ‘all your (non-human) creatures’ (coming as it does between references to ‘all your holy ones’ and ‘all your angels’), while in Mark 16.15 πᾶσιν τῇ κτίσει seems to mean ‘every human creature’.

6 Thus also C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–9) 1.411–12; U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (3 vols.; EKKNT 6; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978–82) II.152–3; Dunn, *Romans*, 1.469; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 506; D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 514; E. Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 175–8; Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 180; R. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 511.

of God; (2) the statement in 8.21 that ‘creation itself’ (αὐτὴ ἢ κτίσις) will enjoy freedom that is connected with the glory of the children of God; and (3) the statement in 8.23 that ‘not only (does creation groan), but we ourselves also (ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοῖ) groan’.⁷ Such *differentiation*, however, should not be taken as indicating radical *separation*. Rather, Paul is here distinguishing between believers and the rest of creation *precisely in the interest of* stressing their solidarity both in suffering and in hope and highlighting the ways in which their current situations and future destinies are inextricably intertwined (inasmuch as they are both constituent elements of God’s κτίσις more broadly defined).⁸ Yet the decisive importance assigned to the ‘revelation of the children of God’ suggests a certain degree of difference beyond the similarity.⁹

In light of 8.18, I understand τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ as an elliptical reference to ‘the revelation of God’s glory to/in the children of God’.¹⁰ If this is the intended sense, the emphasis is not so much on the public uncovering of the previously veiled *identity* or *status* of the ‘children of God’¹¹ as on the decisive

7 As for the notion that *unbelieving* humanity constitutes part of the referent of κτίσις in this passage, it is difficult to conceive of unbelievers ‘eagerly awaiting the revelation of the children of God’ in light of the sharp contrast that Paul draws between the children of God and those who live κατὰ σάρκα, whose thinking is controlled by the flesh, who stand in enmity with God, who are unable to submit to the divine law and powerless to please God, who do not have the Spirit of Christ and do not belong to Christ (8.5–9).

8 Even those who argue for an all-inclusive referent for κτίσις often find it difficult to avoid making an implicit distinction between (believing) humanity and the rest of creation. Gibbs, for example, asserts that ‘all of creation is being designated’, but then, confusingly, argues that ‘if “the creation” may be taken to mean *the entire creation*, then, Paul says . . . that there is a solidarity *between* man and creation, so that creation is affected by man’s action’ (*Creation and Redemption*, 40; emphasis added), and elsewhere claims that Rom 8 speaks of the hope ‘which is characteristic of *both* creation and Christians’ (35; emphasis added). With somewhat greater nuance, Eastman says, ‘the ἀπαρχὴ τοῦ πνεύματος impels Christians themselves *also* to groan *with* all creation and thus here minimizes their separation from the rest of the cosmos’ (‘Whose Apocalypse’, 274; emphasis added). Such formulations reflect the fact that Paul’s language virtually compels the interpreter to speak of believers and (the rest of) creation as distinct subjects.

9 Thus, one may affirm, with Gaventa, that Paul is speaking of ‘we’ as ‘a featured section of the orchestra [of creation], not a different orchestra’ (*Our Mother*, 54), while still insisting that Paul’s very act of ‘featuring’ one section serves to demarcate it to some degree from the ‘non-featured’ sections.

10 Eastman (‘Whose Apocalypse’, 265–6) rightly points out that the membership of the ‘children of God’ who will take part in this apocalyptic revelation need not be identical with that of the ‘children of God’ as currently constituted in 8.14–17, since Paul appears to envision the possibility that the number of God’s children will in the meantime be increased, particularly through the inclusion of ‘all Israel’ (Rom 11.26).

11 Thus e.g. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.412–13; Dunn, *Romans*, 1.470; Moo, *Romans*, 515; T. R. Jackson, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept* (WUNT 2.272; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 162.

eschatological manifestation of the divine glory that triumphs over Sin and Death through the appearance of glorified believers in their resurrected bodies alongside Christ at the *παρουσία*.¹² Here, again, believers are the conduit for the revelation of divine glory rather than the objects of revelation as such,¹³ and the rest of creation waits in breathless anticipation for this apocalyptic event.

Why? Because, according to v. 20, creation was ‘subjected to futility’ (ὕπετάγη τῇ ματαιότητι). Ὑπετάγη here is most naturally taken as a divine passive expressing an authoritative act of God¹⁴ (as in Ps 8.7 LXX; 1 Cor 15.27–8; Eph 1.22; Heb 2.5, 8; 1 Pet 3.22; similarly Phil 3.21 with Christ as subject).¹⁵ Moreover, the use of the aorist tense may well point towards a decisive instance of subjection – presumably the Fall of Gen 3, as a result of which Sin and Death entered the world (Rom 5.12).¹⁶ Indeed, Gen 3.17 records that God placed the earth under a curse as a result of Adam and Eve’s disobedience, thereby subjecting it to ‘futility’, in the sense of an inability to fully enjoy the blessings or perform the functions for which God designed it.¹⁷ Later Jewish literature bears witness to the tenacity of

12 Cf. 1 Thess 3.13; 4.16–17; 1 Cor 15.23; Rom 8.11; Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 183–4; Hultgren, *Romans*, 322.

13 Similarly, Gaventa writes that ‘the glory of God’s children ... is a function of God, not something that comes from them or in any way inheres in them’ (*Our Mother*, 59).

14 Thus e.g. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 43–4; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.413; Dunn, *Romans*, 1.470; Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18–30*, 154–60; Adams, *Constructing the World*, 178; Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 188; Jewett, *Romans*, 513; Jackson, *New Creation*, 157–8; Hultgren, *Romans*, 323.

15 Cf. also God’s authoritative ‘handing over’ of humanity in Rom 1.24, 26, 28 and ‘imprisonment’ of all under disobedience in Rom 11.32.

16 Thus Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.413; Käsemann, *Romans*, 235. L. J. Braaten objects that ‘Paul viewed the subjection of creation not as a onetime primeval event, but rather as a *repeated* occurrence’ and that ‘creation is not redeemed from ... a primeval curse on nature by God; rather, she is redeemed from the ongoing effects of human sin’ (‘All Creation Groans: Romans 8:22 in Light of the Biblical Sources’, *HBT* 28 (2006) 136; emphasis original). In light of the emphasis that Paul places on the sweeping cosmic effects of the actions of the ‘one man’ (Rom 5.12), however, it seems better to see creation’s subjection as an *on-going* (rather than *repeated*) state that nevertheless has a definitive point of origin in Adam’s transgression and the resultant divine decree. Moreover, I would argue that the curse placed on the ground in Gen 3.17 is itself one of the ‘effects of human sin’.

17 I thus follow Cranfield (*Romans*, 1.413) in taking ματαιότης to refer to the frustration of creation’s ability to fulfil the purposes for which it was designed as a result of human sin. One may compare the use of the verb ματαιόομαι in Rom 1.21, where humanity’s thinking is ‘rendered futile’ in the sense that the process by which knowledge of God catalyses honour of God is disrupted. Dunn notes with reference to the two passages that ‘creation has been caught up in the futility of human self-deception’ (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 100). On other possible nuances of ματαιότης, see especially Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.413–14; Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18–30*, 150–4; Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 189–91.

the conviction that humanity's primal sin had negative consequences for the rest of the natural order.¹⁸

I take Rom 8.20b – οὐκ ἔκοῦσα ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα – to be a further explanation of the circumstances surrounding creation's subjection.¹⁹ A number of interpreters have contended that οὐκ ἔκοῦσα indicates that creation (in contrast to humanity) was subjected to futility 'not through its own fault'.²⁰ Such a claim has sometimes been combined with the view that τὸν ὑποτάξαντα is a reference to Adam. As Frédéric Godet explains, '[if οὐκ ἔκοῦσα] signifies: not by its own fault, it is natural to seek in the contrasted term a designation of the person on whom the moral responsibility for this catastrophe rests'.²¹ But while Paul might well affirm that creation was subjected to futility not as a result of its own sin, but as a result of Adam's sin, it is dubious to assume that this is the point he is making here, since the normal meaning of ἐκὼν is 'willingly, voluntarily',²² which is precisely the sense it has in its only other NT occurrence (1 Cor 9.17).²³ I thus understand οὐκ ἔκοῦσα to mean not 'through no fault of its own', but rather 'not by its own choice'. As Robert Jewett puts it, 'Here Paul continues the personified manner of speaking about nature, as if it would have preferred not to participate in the sinful futility caused by Adam and Eve and their descendants.'²⁴

18 E.g. Sir 40.8–9; *Jub.* 3.28; 4.26; Philo, *QG* 1.32; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.50; 4 *Ezra* 7.11–12; *Gen. Rab.* 12.6. For an extensive survey of the themes of the corruption and redemption of creation in Jewish apocalyptic literature, see Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 33–168.

19 B. Byrne labels these words 'something of a parenthesis, wedged between the main verb ... and the following reference to "hope"' (*Romans* (SP 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 260).

20 Thus Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.414; similarly M.-J. Lagrange: 'de façon qu'il n'y ait pas de sa faute' (*Saint Paul: Épitre aux Romains* (Paris: Gabalda, 1931⁴) 208); H. R. Balz: 'ohne eigenes Zutun' (*Heilsvertrauen und Welterfahrung: Strukturen der paulinischen Eschatologie nach Römer 8,18–39* (BEvT 59; Munich: Kaiser, 1971) 41); H. Schlier: 'von Schuld nicht die Rede sein kann' (*Der Römerbrief* (HThKNT 6; Freiburg: Herder, 1977) 261); Käsemann: 'creation did not incur guilt for itself as mankind did' (*Romans*, 235).

21 F. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1880–1) II.91. Others who take τὸν ὑποτάξαντα to be Adam include Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.* 14.5; G. W. H. Lampe, 'The New Testament Doctrine of Ktisis', *SJT* 17 (1964) 458; S. Lyonnet, 'Redemptio "Cosmica" Secundum Rom 8.19–23', *VD* 44 (1966) 228; Balz, *Heilsvertrauen*, 41; Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 261; Byrne, *Romans*, 258–61. Surprisingly, some have insisted that τὸν ὑποτάξαντα is Adam even while apparently conceding that ὑπετάγη should be taken as a divine passive (e.g. Balz, *Heilsvertrauen*, 41; Schlier, *Römerbrief*, 261; Byrne, *Romans*, 260). Such an interpretative move, however, is exceedingly strained, as it is surely more natural to see Paul's use of the same verb twice in such close succession as pointing towards a single event of subjection, and thus a single subjecting agent.

22 LSJ s.v. ἐκὼν 1; BDAG s.v. ἐκὼν; L&N 25.65.

23 Cf. also the cognates ἐκούσιος in Phlm 14 and ἐκουσίως in Heb 10.26; 1 Pet 5.2.

24 Jewett, *Romans*, 514. Similarly, Gaventa renders οὐκ ἔκοῦσα 'not freely' (*Our Mother*, 54).

This reading preserves a comprehensible contrast between ἐκοῦσα and διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, while supporting the notion that the latter phrase refers to God rather than Adam. Creation was subjected ‘not voluntarily’, but because of the divine decree of God, who determined that Sin and Death, having gained entry to the world through human disobedience, should be permitted to hold sway for a time not merely over the descendants of Adam, but over the entire created order.²⁵ Thus, the *proximate* cause of creation’s subjection was the divine decision and action of ‘the one who subjected it’, while the *remote* cause was human sinfulness, through which the entire creation was implicated in a nexus of futility and corruption.²⁶

Having thus explained that creation’s eager anticipation of the revelation of the children of God stems from its present subjection to futility, Paul turns his attention in 8.21 to the prospect of creation’s liberation, whereby it will be enabled to share in the ‘freedom of the glory of the children of God’. Here we encounter the question that will concern us for the remainder of this study: what is the meaning and function of the phrase ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι in 8.20c, by means of which the present reality of creation’s subjection is linked to the future prospect of its liberation?

2. Romans 8.20c: The Meaning of ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι

The scholarly literature on Rom 8 reflects a striking diversity of opinion concerning the precise way in which the phrase ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι (often rendered ‘in hope’) is to be understood.²⁷ Grammatically, interpreters are divided as to

25 Of course, the notion that the non-human creation was subjected ‘involuntarily’ is still capable of evoking a secondary contrast with humanity, particularly in light of Rom 1.24, 26, 28, where Paul thrice states that God ‘handed over’ (παρέδωκεν) humanity – who knew God and yet did not honour him (1.21) – in response to its wilful idolatry and rebellion.

26 This distinction is nicely captured in the statement of E. Gräßer: ‘Adam zwar der Grund für das ὑποτάσσεσθαι, nicht aber selbst der ὑποτάξας ist’ (‘Das Seufzen der Kreatur (Röm 8,19–22): Auf der Suche nach einer “biblischen Tierschutzethik”’, in *Schöpfung und Neuschöpfung* (ed. Ingo Baldermann et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990) 107).

27 As a preliminary point, it is necessary to decide whether the conjunction that follows at the beginning of 8.21 should be read as ὅτι (P⁴⁶ A B C D² K L P Ψ 33 and numerous minuscules) or διότι (x D* F G). The decision is complicated by the presence of the -δι ending on ἐλπίδι, for if ὅτι was original, a δι- prefix could have been added through dittography, while if διότι was original it could have dropped out through haplography (cf. B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994²) 456; Jewett, *Romans*, 504). Alternatively, a scribe who interpreted an original ὅτι in a causal sense could have changed it to διότι in order to make the causal nuance more explicit. Ultimately, however, the weight of the external evidence is strongly in favour of ὅτι. While some commentators who accept that ὅτι is the stronger reading nevertheless favour taking the conjunction in a causal sense (e.g. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.471; Hultgren, *Romans*, 320), it

whether it should be taken as modifying the finite verb ὑπετάγη²⁸ or the substantival participle τὸν ὑποτάξαντα.²⁹ Provided, however, that one understands both forms of ὑποτάσσω as pointing towards *God's* action (rather than seeing *Adam* as τὸν ὑποτάξαντα), this decision becomes somewhat less significant, as the underlying claim that 'God subjected creation ἐφ' ἐλπίδι' remains the same in either case.³⁰

As for the ways in which the *meaning* of the phrase has been understood, constructing an exhaustive catalogue is made difficult both by the extreme ambiguity inherent in interpreters' frequent recourse to the polyvalent English phrases 'in hope' and 'with hope', and by the fact that some scholars appear to espouse more than one view at various points in their exegesis. Nevertheless, we may tentatively identify three basic possible construals:

- (1) 'Hope' is that which underlay God's act of subjecting creation (grounds/basis);
- (2) 'Hope' is that which God aimed to produce in creation by subjecting it (purpose/aim);
- (3) 'Hope' is that which inhered in creation in the wake of, and in spite of, its subjection (attendant circumstance).

In what follows, I will examine the grammatical basis for each of these interpretations and their implications for the meaning of Rom 8.19–21 before offering an alternative proposal that I believe alleviates some of the difficulties that have attended the interpretation of this phrase.

2.1 Option 1: 'Hope' Is That Which Underlay and Motivated God's Act of Subjecting Creation

Of the three options just mentioned, the first appears to have the most secure grammatical basis. BDF §235.2 notes that ἐπί with the dative 'most frequently denotes the basis for a state of being, action, or result' and thus takes ἐφ' ἐλπίδι in Rom 8.20 (and elsewhere in the NT) to mean 'on the basis of

seems preferable to see Paul using ὅτι to introduce the *content* of the hope, as he does in Phil 1.20 (and perhaps also 2 Cor 1.10, although here the presence of the conjunction is textually uncertain). Thus also Moo, *Romans*, 516 and n. 45; Byrne, *Romans*, 261; L&N 90.21.

28 Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.414; Moo, *Romans*, 516 n. 43; Byrne, *Romans*, 260–1.

29 Dunn, *Romans*, 1.470 (*viz*); Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 508; Jewett, *Romans*, 514; Hultgren, *Romans*, 319, 323; RSV.

30 Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18–30*, 160. Granted, those who see God's own hope as in view are somewhat more likely to understand ἐφ' ἐλπίδι as modifying the participle, while those who attribute hope to creation are more likely to link ἐφ' ἐλπίδι with the finite verb, but there is not a strictly necessary correlation between the grammatical decision and the construal of the agent of hoping.

hope'. Similarly, BDAG (s.v. ἐπί 6.a) renders the phrase as 'on the basis of hope, supporting itself on hope'. A survey of other instances of ἐπ' ἐλπίδι in the NT reveals that this construal of the phrase's meaning appears well founded.³¹

- Acts 26.6: καὶ νῦν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς εἰς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἐπαγγελίας γενομένης ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἕστηκα κρινόμενος ('Now I stand on trial *on the basis of [my] hope* in the promise made by God to our ancestors');
- Rom 4.18: ὃς παρ' ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν ... ('[Abraham] ... who believed against hope *on the basis of hope* ...');
- Rom 5.2: καυχώμεθα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ('We boast *on the basis of [our] hope* of the glory of God');
- 1 Cor 9.10: ὀφείλει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὁ ἀροτριῶν ἀροτριᾶν καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν ('The one who ploughs should plough *on the basis of hope* and the one who threshes [should thresh] *on the basis of hope* of sharing [the crop]');
- Titus 1.2: ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αἰωνίου ('[Paul serves God as an apostle of Christ] *on the basis of hope* for eternal life').

Broadening the scope of our inquiry, we find that several of the relatively few instances of ἐπ' ἐλπίδι that predate Paul appear to bear this same sense:³²

- Thucydides 6.31.6: ἐπὶ μεγίστῃ ἐλπίδι τῶν μελλόντων ... ἐπεχειρήθη ('[The voyage] was undertaken *on the basis of the greatest hope* for the future');
- Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 10.9.2: οἱ παρεληφότες τὸ δεῦτερον τὴν δημαρχίαν ἐπὶ τῇ ἐλπίδι τοῦ κυρώσειν τὸν νόμον ('Those who had assumed the tribuneship for the second time *on the basis of [their] hope* of securing the ratification of the law');
- Diodorus Siculus 13.21.7: οἱ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς μάχαις τοῖς ἐναντίοις τὰ σώματα ἐγχειρίζοντες, ἐπ' ἐλπίδι σωτηρίας τοῦτο πράττουσιν ('For those who in battle hand their bodies over to their opponents do this *on the basis of the hope* of deliverance');
- Philo, *Mos.* 1.193: ἐπ' ἐλευθερίας ἐλπίδι μεταναστάντες ... ('Having departed *on the basis of [our] hope* of freedom ...').

It thus seems that there is clear grammatical warrant for understanding ἐπ' ἐλπίδι in Rom 8.20 as identifying hope as the grounds or basis underlying

31 I defer until later in the essay consideration of Acts 2.26, where the interpretation of ἐπ' ἐλπίδι is complicated by the fact that we are dealing with a quotation from the LXX.

32 A preliminary TLG search for ἐπί (τῇ) ἐλπίδι/ἐπί (ταῖς) ἐλπίσιν (including variant spellings) returned only thirty-six instances predating Paul, of which only nineteen occur in non-Jewish texts. In addition to the texts cited below, cf. e.g. Theognis, *Eleg.* 1.333; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.18; Lysias, *Orat.* 6.23.1.

God's act of subjecting creation. This meaning is clearly presupposed by the NJB, which reads, 'It was not for its own purposes that creation had frustration imposed on it, but for the purposes of him who imposed it – *with the intention that* (i.e. 'on the basis of God's hope that') the whole creation itself might be freed.' Among commentators, Leon Morris provides perhaps the clearest articulation of this view: '[T]here is no reason to think of Adam or of Satan acting *in hope* for the future of the race, but hope *is characteristic of God*.'³³

Arland Hultgren has argued, however, that while it is true that Paul could not plausibly have intended to ascribe a motivation of hope to Adam, neither is it self-evidently appropriate for Paul to speak of God as acting 'on the basis of hope'. Hultgren is particularly concerned that interpreting ἐφ' ἐλπίδι ὅτι to mean that God acted in the hope *that* the creation itself would be set free 'leaves the matter less certain, for the hope expressed in that rendering can signify little more than a wish'.³⁴ His solution is to interpret the ὅτι causally instead, thus taking the sense to be, '[God subjected the creation] in hope, *because* the creation itself will be set free'. Hultgren believes that this rendering links God's hope-driven subjection of creation with 'an expectation that is certain', which he insists is 'the only mode of hope that is fitting for God'.³⁵

While some might well take issue with Hultgren's implicit reduction of many other instances of biblical hope to 'little more than a wish', his reticence to see Paul depicting God as 'hoping that something will happen' is fully comprehensible given Paul's language elsewhere in Rom 8. In 8.24, the apostle opines that 'hope that is seen is not hope' (ἐλπίς δὲ βλεπομένη οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλπίς) and poses the rhetorical question, 'for who hopes for what one sees?' (ὃ γὰρ βλέπει τίς ἐλπίζει;). Thus, for Paul, genuine hope apparently entails a certain inability to verify in advance that the object of one's hope will be realised. In defence of Hultgren's position, there does appear to be a certain incongruity between this description of hope as an attitude of expectant watchfulness directed towards what is currently unseen (and therefore unverifiable) and Paul's subsequent depiction of God in 8.27–9 as the one who searches hearts and knows

33 L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 321–2 (emphasis added). F. J. Leenhardt's claim that 'man himself [in contrast to God] could not connect any kind of hope to the subjection of creation' also appears to reflect this view (*The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary* (London: Lutterworth, 1961) 220; emphasis added). For similar statements concerning the relative appropriateness of God, Adam, and/or Satan subjecting creation 'in hope', cf. also Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption*, 44; Adams, *Constructing the World*, 178; Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 188; Jewett, *Romans*, 514 n. 68. It is not always clear in such passages, however, whether the commentator means to imply 'only God could, acting in hope, subject creation', or 'only God could subject creation in(to) a state of hope'.

34 Hultgren, *Romans*, 323.

35 Hultgren, *Romans*, 323.

the mind of the Spirit, who foreknows and predetermines in accordance with the divine purpose.

The notion that one should not too quickly ascribe the ‘hope’ of Rom 8.20 to God finds further support in the fact that, of the 314 occurrences of the ελπ- stem in the LXX and NT, there are, so far as I have been able to determine, no other instances in which God is portrayed as the subject of the act of hoping. Importantly, this finding also tells against Hultgren’s view that God *does* in fact exercise here a certain ‘mode of hope’ (albeit one that Hultgren finds more ‘fitting’). If the LXX and NT nowhere depict God as hoping *that* something will happen, neither do they ever describe God as exercising hope *because of* divine certainty that something will happen. Both parts of the Greek Bible consistently portray God as the appropriate *object* of hope, never as its subject.³⁶ Thus, while this construal of ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι is unimpeachable grammatically, it is not without problems in terms of biblical usage and theology.

2.2 Option 2: ‘Hope’ Is That Which God Aimed to Produce in Creation by Subjecting It

The second option continues to see ‘hope’ as closely linked with God’s act of subjecting, but takes hope to be the *purpose/aim* rather than the *basis/grounds* of this action.³⁷ While ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι is never used in this way in the NT, this use of ἐπί + the dative may be reflected in such texts as Gal 5.13 (ἐπ’ ἐλευθερίῳ ἐκλήθητε, ‘you were called for the purpose of [experiencing] freedom’) and Eph 2.10 (κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς, ‘created in Christ for the purpose of [performing] good works’). Thus, the sense in Rom 8.20 would be ‘creation was subjected to futility *for the purpose of* [experiencing] hope’.

Something like this may be the view of John Murray, who says, ‘neither Satan nor man could have subjected [creation] *in hope*; only God could have subjected it *with such a design*’.³⁸ It is often difficult in practice, however, to differentiate between this sense and the previous one in the remarks of commentators. Gieniusz, for example, argues that ἐπί should be taken as indicating ‘purpose, goal’, but then says that God’s actions ‘have a purpose, are not without hope’, in which statement ‘hope’ appears to be that which *undergirds* God’s purposeful actions rather than that which they aim to produce.³⁹

The chief shortcoming of this view is that it seems rather unnatural for Paul to suggest that the *purpose* of creation’s subjection to futility was to bring about hope. To be sure, suffering can contribute to the growth of hope (Rom 5.3–4),

36 E.g. Ps 30.7 (MT 31.6); 36.3 (MT 37.3); 77.7 (MT 78.7); Isa 26.4; Jer 17.7; 2 Macc 2.18; Acts 24.15; 1 Tim 4.10; 5.5; 6.17.

37 This function of ἐπί + the dative is noted by BDF §235.4; BDAG s.v. ἐπί 16; L&N 89.60.

38 J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959–65) 1.303 (emphasis added).

39 Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18–30*, 161 and n. 542.

but to concede this is not the same as to say that the answer to the question ‘Why is there suffering?’ is ‘so that there might be hope’. As Heinrich Meyer has argued, the *purpose* behind the subjection, strictly speaking, was ‘the implication of the κτίσις in the entrance of sin among [hu]mankind’.⁴⁰ Hope aims at the liberation that lies beyond this lamentable subjection to futility, but it is more difficult to see hope as that which was aimed at *by* the act of subjection.

2.3 Option 3: ‘Hope’ Is That Which Inhered in Creation in Spite of its Subjection

A number of interpreters have advanced comments reflecting the conviction that ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι is to be understood not primarily in relation to God’s action, but rather in relation to creation’s state resulting from that action, such that the sense is that creation was subjected ‘in a condition of hopefulness’ or ‘while nevertheless retaining hope’.⁴¹ Thus, one reads that creation ‘was never without hope’,⁴² ‘still retains the hope’,⁴³ ‘continued to cherish a hope’,⁴⁴ ‘still has hope for redemption’,⁴⁵ is ‘marked by “hope”’,⁴⁶ ‘was not subjected to frustration without any hope’,⁴⁷ was ‘in Hoffnung (belassen)’,⁴⁸ and ‘als in der Hoffnung aktiv geschildert wird’.⁴⁹

Surprisingly, such remarks are frequently advanced even by those who elsewhere imply that the ‘hope’ in view is God’s. Thus, Joseph Fitzmyer first concludes that it is God ‘to whom Paul now *ascribes this “hope”*’, yet goes on to say that ‘God, though he cursed the ground because of Adam’s sin, still *gave it a hope* of sharing in human redemption’.⁵⁰ Similarly, Douglas Moo first says that God’s decree of subjection ‘was *issued “in hope”*’, yet proceeds to claim that Paul ‘*attribute[s]*

40 H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1889) 324.

41 E. Hill argues along these lines that ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι serves as a contrast to οὐκ ἔκουσα (taking διὰ τὸν ὑποτόξαντα as a parenthesis explaining the reason for the hope), and thus translates ‘For the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly (indeed) but (*nonetheless*) in hope because of him who subjected it’ (‘The Construction of Three Passages from St. Paul’, *CBQ* 23 (1961) 297; emphasis added). For a critique of this proposal, which requires ἀλλά to signal a less-than-obvious contrast between ‘willingly’ and ‘in hope’, see Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 189.

42 C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991²) 156.

43 Jerusalem Bible.

44 Byrne, *Romans*, 258.

45 Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 192.

46 Jewett, *Romans*, 514.

47 Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.414.

48 Käsemann, *Römer*, 219.

49 G. Nebe, ‘*Hoffnung bei Paulus: Elpis und ihre Synonyme im Zusammenhang der Eschatologie*’ (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983) 87.

50 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 508 (emphasis added).

hope to the creation'.⁵¹ Finally, Robert Jewett contends, 'It is implausible to suggest that either Adam or Satan may be identified as the "one subjecting it in hope", because neither can be understood as acting "in hope"'⁵² – the implication being that it is God who acts 'in hope'. Yet Jewett proceeds to say that Paul presents creation as 'marked by "hope"'⁵³

The tension inherent in such comments seems to reflect interpreters' recognition that the logic of the passage presses us to see the 'hope' in 8.20–1 as intimately bound up with the ἀποκαταδοκία of creation in 8.19 (a nuance that is obscured when the stress is put on hope as an attribute of God). Scholars have largely neglected, however, to identify explicitly a specific grammatical function of the preposition that would support this reading. Admittedly, ἐπί with the dative can occasionally convey 'the condition or circumstances in which one is' (LSJ s.v. ἐπί B.1.i). Indeed, it is just possible that this is the sense of the phrase in Acts 2.26 (quoting Ps 15.9 LXX), where ἡ σάρξ μου κατασκηνώσει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι might mean 'my flesh will live in a state of hope(fulness)', though the meaning might equally well be 'my flesh will live on the basis of hope'. Deciding between these two options is further complicated by the fact that we are dealing with a quotation of the LXX, which elsewhere uses ἐπ' ἐλπίδι rather idiosyncratically.⁵⁴ Regardless of the way in which one understands the function of ἐπ' ἐλπίδι in Acts 2.26, however, it is doubtful that Paul's point in Rom 8.20c is that creation's involuntary subjection to futility occurred while it was in a pre-existing condition of hope. Indeed, against such a construal, we may recall that in Rom 5.3–4 Paul presents hope as a product of endurance through suffering. Thus, it would appear that those interpreters who take creation, rather than God, to be the agent of hope must posit that the preposition conveys a relatively elliptical thought, so that the meaning is, 'Creation was subjected to futility by God in such a way as to enable it nevertheless to emerge into a state marked by hope.' It is at least questionable, however, whether the ἐπί can bear quite so much weight.

51 Moo, *Romans*, 516 and n. 45 (emphasis added).

52 Jewett, *Romans*, 514 n. 68 (emphasis added).

53 Jewett, *Romans*, 514 (emphasis added).

54 Ἐπ' ἐλπίδι is characteristically used in the LXX to translate Hebrew phrases containing forms of the root בָּטַח (cf., in addition to Ps 15.9, LXX Judg 18.7, 10, 27; Ps 4.9; Prov 1.33; Hos 2.20; Zeph 2.15). In context, these Hebrew phrases carry the meaning 'in a state of security' or 'at ease', and thus none of these passages appear to have in view the sort of expectant, forward-looking hope of which Paul writes in Romans (which, in Hebrew, is typically conveyed by קָוָה). Cf. the discussions of R. Bultmann, "ἐλπίς, κτλ", *TDNT* II.521–3; A. Jepsen, 'בָּטַח', *TDOT* II.88–94. The only other occurrences of ἐπ' ἐλπίδι in the LXX are at Isa 28.10, 13, where ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι and ἐλπίς ἐπ' ἐλπίδι are used to translate the Hebrew לִקְוֹת לִקְוֹת, which is rendered 'line upon line' by the NRSV, apparently as a result of the assumption that לִקְוֹת, 'line', was a substantive derived from קָוָה, 'to hope'.

2.4 *An Alternative Proposal: 'Creation Waits Expectantly on the Basis of Hope'*

Having now surveyed the most common ways of understanding the meaning of ἐφ' ἐλπίδι and found them each wanting to various degrees, I wish to suggest that there is an alternative way of punctuating and construing vv. 19–21 that allows ἐφ' ἐλπίδι to retain its normal meaning of 'on the basis of hope' while still attributing hope to the creation rather than to God. My proposal is this: ἐφ' ἐλπίδι should not be taken as directly modifying either ὑπετάγη or τὸν ὑποτάζοντα, but rather should be taken with ἀπεκδέχεται at the end of 8.19.⁵⁵ On this reading, v. 20ab functions as a parenthesis (or, more precisely, a double parenthesis, with 20b subordinated to 20a) in which Paul pauses to describe the current plight of creation (resulting from God's act of subjection) that motivates its eager anticipation of the revealing of the children of God. Thus, the English text of Rom 8.19–21 might be translated and punctuated as follows:

¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God – ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility (not voluntarily, but because of the one who subjected it) – in hope ²¹ that the creation itself might be set free from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

To be sure, this reading requires positing a significant aside in v. 20a–b. But those familiar with Paul's writings will know that extemporaneous digressions, parenthetical remarks and anacolutha are recurrent features of his letters.⁵⁶ Indeed, as BDF notes, 'the Epistles of Paul ... [contain] a variety of ... parentheses, harsher than a careful stylist would allow. Since Paul's train of thought in general includes many and long digressions ... it is not surprising that his sentence structure even in narrower contexts is not uninterrupted.'

As for the *content* of creation's hope outlined in v. 21, I understand the phrase εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ to mean 'into the freedom that will result from the glory experienced by/revealed through the children of God' (taking δόξης as a genitive of source/production). Thus, creation experiences fervent expectation (ἀποκαραδοκία) as it eagerly awaits the eschatological revelation of which Paul spoke in 8.18–19, precisely *because* creation *hopes* that the glorification of God's children will mean liberation for creation as well – liberation from the decay and corruption that has been its lot since human rebellion

⁵⁵ Ἐλπίς/ἐλπίζω is similarly linked with ἀπεκδέχομαι at Gal 5:5; Rom 8:25; and with ἀποκαραδοκία at Phil 1:20.

⁵⁶ On this point, see M. L. Stirewalt Jr, *Paul the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 20–3. For examples of Pauline parentheses, see Rom 1.13; 7.1; 1 Cor 1.16; 9.20–1; Gal 2.2, 6, 8; 1 Thess 4.1.

ushered Sin and Death into the world. It is this hope that functions as the basis/grounds of creation's breathless anticipation.

Apart from allowing ἐφ' ἐλπίδι to retain its usual sense of 'on the basis of hope', another distinct advantage of this proposal is that it throws into sharper relief the close parallels that Paul draws between the respective experiences of creation (vv. 19–22) and of believers (vv. 23–5):

- Creation *waits expectantly* (ἀπεκδέχεται) on the basis of its *hope* (ἐφ' ἐλπίδι) (vv. 19, 20c);
- Creation looks forward to *liberation/redemption* (ἐλευθερίαν) from slavery (v. 21);
- In the interim, creation *groans* (συστενάζει) and experiences birth pangs (v. 22).
- Believers also *groan* (στενάζομεν) (v. 23);
- Believers *wait expectantly* (ἀπεκδεχόμενοι) for the *liberation/redemption* (ἀπολύτρωσιν) of their bodies (v. 23);
- Believers *hope* (ἐλπίζομεν) and *wait expectantly* (ἀπεκδεχόμεθα) through patient endurance (v. 25).

When one understands God to be the agent who acts ἐφ' ἐλπίδι, by contrast, this striking parallelism is less obvious.

A few concluding observations concerning vv. 22–5 will help to clarify how I envision the logic of the entire section holding together. I understand the groans that are uttered οὐ μόνον by creation but also by believers to be expressions of lamentation and longing, cries born of the sufferings of τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ, yet imbued with hope.⁵⁷ As Conrad Gempf and Beverly Gaventa have noted, while the groans of creation are linked with birth pangs (συνωδίνει), its anguish will not come to an end through the imminent arrival of any 'natural offspring', for in its travail creation remains subject to futility.⁵⁸

Rather, the groaning of creation will cease only through the *adoption* (υἰοθεσίαν) that believers eagerly await (ἀπεκδεχόμενοι) (8.23).⁵⁹ Paul identifies this adoption with 'the redemption of our bodies'⁶⁰ (τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ

57 For possible linkages between Paul's use of στενάζω and images of lamentation and mourning in the Hebrew prophets, see Braaten, 'All Creation Groans', 131–59.

58 C. Gempf, 'The Imagery of Birth Pangs in the New Testament', *TynBul* 45 (1994) 123–4; Gaventa, *Our Mother*, 53, 56–9.

59 Thus, the content of creation's hope in the midst of its labour 'is not "this pain will produce a future good", but rather "the present agony will not always be with us"' (Gempf, 'Birth Pangs', 124).

60 While Gaventa (*Our Mother*, 58) questions the validity of translating the singular σώματος as 'bodies', N. Turner notes that the use of the distributive singular of σώμα with plural

σώματος ἡμῶν), which is still to be experienced by those who already have the ‘first fruits which is the Spirit’⁶¹ – that is, those who have received the ‘Spirit of adoption’ that already bears witness (in advance of the consummation of the adoptive process) that they are children of God (8.15–16). I take this ‘redemption’ as a reference to the eschatological resurrection that will be accomplished through the Spirit (8.11),⁶² in conjunction with which the revelation of God’s glory for which creation yearns will be accomplished.

Finally, with vv. 24–5 we return to the theme of hope, as Paul asserts, τῇ γὰρ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν. The shift from ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι (8.20) to τῇ ἐλπίδι (v. 24) is significant, for Paul does not mean to assert here that believers are saved *on the basis of* their hope. Rather, given Paul’s unusual use of the aorist tense to refer to salvation,⁶³ and in light of the context of partial fulfilment and on-going expectation, the most plausible interpretation seems to be that advocated by C. E. B. Cranfield, James Dunn and Joseph Fitzmyer, among others, which is to take τῇ ἐλπίδι as a modal dative of manner. On this view, Paul envisions a proleptic ‘salvation’ that has already occurred through Christ’s death and resurrection and the bestowal of the Spirit, but that still anticipates God’s ultimate victory over Sin and Death, and that is thus characterised by hope. As Dunn expresses it, ‘*So far as hope is concerned* we are already saved; but hope itself is not the completion of salvation.’⁶⁴ Such a full and final salvation cannot yet be seen or attained – indeed, if it could, there would be no need for hope (8.24–5). The groaning and travailing must continue. Yet both believers and creation continue to wait – eagerly, expectantly, hopefully – for liberation, for redemption, for the revelation of God’s glory.

3. Conclusion

If my reading of Rom 8.18–25 is correct in its broad outlines, Paul here paints an evocative picture of reality wherein the past subjection, present suffering

possessive pronouns for the plural ‘bodies’ is a regular NT idiom (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. III: *Syntax*; ed. James Hope Moulton; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963) 23–4). Cf. Matt 6.25; Luke 12.22; 1 Cor 6.19, 20; 2 Cor 4.10; Jas 3.3.

61 I thus take τοῦ πνεύματος to be an exegetical genitive.

62 With Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.419; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 510.

63 Elsewhere Paul typically refers to salvation as something lying in the future (e.g. Rom 5.9–10; 10.9; 13.11; 1 Cor 3.15; 5.5).

64 Dunn, *Romans*, 1.475 (emphasis added). Cranfield similarly argues that τῇ ἐλπίδι provides a ‘necessary qualification’ indicating that ‘the final effect of God’s action, namely, our enjoying salvation, still lies in the future’ (*Romans*, 1.419–20). Cf. also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 515; Hultgren, *Romans*, 325; Turner, *Syntax*, 241. Moo prefers to interpret it as an associative dative, thereby seeing hope ‘as the ever present companion of this salvation’ (*Romans*, 522 n. 72).

and future glory of creation and believing humanity are tightly bound up together. Moreover, if my understanding of ἐφ' ἐλπίδι in 8.20c has merit, then Paul says that creation itself, in solidarity with believers, continues to nurture a hope for liberation from its enslavement to futility and corruption. Paul's attribution of deep yearning and agonised groans to the personified creation reflects his conviction that the incursion of Sin and Death into the world in the wake of Adam's transgression has had catastrophic consequences not only for humanity, but for the rest of the Creator's handiwork as well. Yet this grim present reality is held in tension with the vision of a glorious future in which the revelation of God's redeemed children will result in creation's attainment of its long-awaited freedom. It is for this climactic transformation that the κτίσις waits ἐφ' ἐλπίδι.