

“All flesh is grass.” As we enter the season of winter, the fertility of the land has started to fade. Leaves have changed colors—having gone from green, then to yellows, reds, and oranges, and then to brown—and now most of them have fallen to the ground **dead**. The summer grasses have all gone brown and have died. The cool weather grasses are hanging on, but are beginning to lose their green. All the beautiful flowers that popped up for a few days over the past 6 months have withered and died. Most of the insects have disappeared and died as well. We see this happen every single year. Yet because we live for years, it is easy to lie to ourselves and think that we are somehow different from these grasses and insects. But we are not. ***“All flesh is grass.”***

The prophet declares, ***“The inhabitants of the earth are like insects.”*** A fruit fly has a life expectancy of about 14 days. A person who lives for 80 years will live 2,000 times longer than a fruit fly. Yet a star like our sun is thought to have a lifespan of about 10 billion years. Our sun will live 125,000 times longer than a person who lives to be 80 years old. From the perspective of the stars, we are just as fleeting and insignificant as grass and insects. A human lifespan from the sun’s perspective is about 5 hours long. And yet it is thought that a red dwarf star can live for more than 100 trillion years, which is 10,000 times longer than our own sun. Yet even red dwarf stars will run out of energy and will die. Every star will die, for ***“all flesh is grass.”*** Mountains erode, planets are destroyed, and stars die. There is nothing in all creation that does not wither and fade. Compared to a fruit fly we endure and live for a long time, but compared to the stars—which themselves will also die—we are like grass, we are like insects. From an eternal perspective, we are alive one day and dead the next.

Yet the things that we humans build often outlive us. Nations usually live longer than any individual. But even nations fade and die. The prophet Isaiah says, ***“All the nations are like a drop in a bucket. All the nations are as nothing and they are counted as nothing.”*** The longest lived uninterrupted government was the Republic of Venice which endured for 1,100 years. The longest lived uninterrupted empire was the Byzantine Empire that lasted for 874 years. As the prophet Isaiah says, ***“The Creator turns the rulers of the earth into nothing. For as soon as they have taken root, the Creator blows on them and they are dried up and the winds carry them away like stubble.”*** And this also goes for all other works of human hands. All human buildings have either crumbled or been buried over time. Even the pyramids are eroding, crumbling, and being buried as time continues its relentless march forward. As the prophet Isaiah says, ***“Every glory of man is like a flower of grass. The grass has dried up and the flower has fallen.”*** Nothing that we humans build will stand and endure. All of it will fade and die and come to nothing.

The only thing that truly endures is the Creator and his Word. As Isaiah says, ***“The word of our Creator remains forever.”*** It is the Creator’s Word that has made all creation, all the cosmos, ***“all flesh.”*** There is nothing in all creation like the Creator. As the Creator says, ***“Who can compare to me? Lift up your eyes and see. Who has made all these things? Who alone can number the cosmos?”*** The Creator made his creation in order to dwell within it—to make his creation his temple, his house. The Creator desires to live within the cosmos and within ***“all flesh”*** that he has made so he can give it life and make it endure through his Word.

But sadly the creation has **rejected** the Creator’s Spirit and Word. The creation has turned inward on itself in **selfishness**, thinking it can live without the Creator and his Word. ***“All flesh”*** lives only for its own **comfort** and **pleasure**. And on top of it all, we humans **arrogantly** think we can know what is ***“good and evil”*** and choose for ourselves what is best. And in our arrogance we violently **destroy** the Creator’s creation, we destroy ***“all flesh,”*** our own and all that is around us. And so the Creator has humbled ***“all flesh,”*** by removing his life giving Spirit and subjecting ***“all flesh”*** to death and decay. The Creator has made ***“all flesh like grass”*** so we cannot destroy his creation and so that ***“all flesh”*** will see its nothingness apart from the Creator and his Spirit.

But even though ***“all flesh”*** has rejected the Creator and been subjected to death and decay that does not mean there is no hope for the creation. The Creator **loves** what he has created and he has humbled ***“all flesh”*** to save it. The Creator will not give up on his creation, the flesh that he himself has made, he will not give up on his **bride** that has wandered from him. As Isaiah says, ***“All flesh will see the salvation of the Creator because the Lord has spoken.”*** The Creator’s Word spoke all creation, all the cosmos, ***“all flesh”*** into existence. And it is the Creator’s Word that will bring salvation and life to ***“all flesh,”*** to a fading and dying creation. The Creator is saving his creation, even as he humbles it, and preparing it for **marriage** with himself. The Creator saves ***“all flesh”*** that he has made from bondage to selfishness and arrogance so his Spirit can make a home within ***“all flesh.”*** The Creator declares, ***“Comfort, comfort! Your humiliation is complete, your sins have been forgiven.”*** It is easy for us to think that the Creator has abandoned us, abandoned ***“all flesh.”*** We see the cycles of creation, we see the death and decay and futility in ***“all flesh”*** and it is easy to think the Creator is absent, brutally unkind, or is not even real. But the Creator is preparing a wedding, preparing his creation for marriage with himself. The Creator is preparing ***“all flesh”*** for marriage to his Spirit. The prophet is clear, ***“All flesh will see the salvation of the Creator.”***

“All flesh is grass.” We are nothing. We are as insignificant as fruit flies that live for a couple of weeks. We are here one day and gone the next. We age, we fade, we get injured, we become disabled, we lose our memories, we lose our minds, we die. Even rocks stand longer than we do. Yet we are **loved**. ***“All flesh will see the salvation of the Creator because the Lord has spoken.”*** The Creator made us with his Word and even after we fade and die, his Word will make us again. His Word will speak and call us forth from our graves. The Creator will renew our strength, he will wash away our exhaustion. It is the Creator’s Spirit and Word that gives life and sustains it. The Creator desires his Spirit to live within ***“all flesh,”*** within our flesh, within **your** flesh.

So ***“prepare the way of the Lord.”*** Embrace being humbled. Embrace your frailty. Embrace aging and death. Your flower will fall, you will fade and die like grass. But the Creator will not abandon you, he will not abandon his creation, his cosmos. ***“All flesh will see the salvation of the Creator.”*** The Creator is coming to bring you his salvation, to renew his creation, to make ***“all flesh”*** new. He will speak and life will come into you again. Your weariness and exhaustion will be wiped away. You will be given wings to fly, you will run once again. As the prophet Isaiah declares, ***“Youths become hungry and exhausted, even the chosen people will lose their strength. But those who wait on the Creator will gain strength, they will grow wings like eagles, they will run and not be exhausted, they will walk and not be hungry.”***

So ***“wait on the Creator.”*** He alone can strengthen you. Your flesh will fail, you will fade into nothingness and die. All nations will fall, all buildings will crumble, the earth will burn, and stars will die. ***“But the word of our Creator remains forever.”*** And his Word will not abandon his creation, he will not abandon you. Trust in him, cling to him alone, for ***“all flesh will see the salvation of the Creator.”*** Amen.