

Man's Covenant with the Earth



Why do disasters happen?

Why are there famines, earthquakes, floods, destruction and death in man and beast, with it's ruin and decay felt by all life on the earth? Does it have to do with us? When Cain sinned by shedding the blood of his brother, a great curse was pronounced by God as the accompanying result: "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." (Genesis 4:11-12) Does this punishment seem harsh? Why was the earth not to yield her strength any longer after Cain sinned? Was God actively punishing Cain, or was God pronouncing the punishment that Cain brought upon himself? While there are instances where we see active punishment from God (Gen. 19:24, Isaiah 37:36, Rev. 20:9), we're going to understand something deeper regarding the judgment of Cain more fully as we see what the Scripture says regarding man's covenant with the earth.

MAN'S RELATION TO THE EARTH

A theme woven into the Scriptural account regarding man is that he has been taken from "the dust of the earth" (Gen. 2:7). In fact, the ground from which our first father came was

called in the Hebrew, "Adamah"; thus "Adam" was the name given to the representative of the whole earth. Likewise, the whole human race was also called "Adam" (Genesis 5:2), but in English is appropriately called "Man", or more commonly termed "Human". This name testified to our relationship with the earth, as God designed us by His own hand from it, and established our relationship with Him in it.

The Creator designed us to have dominion over the earth, and to take care of it and keep it (Genesis 1:26, 2:4-17). Man was made perfect. No wrinkle, scar, nor trace of blood was visible upon him; he had perfect health and strength, and his intellectual endowments were fearfully and wonderfully wrought by the hand of Infinite Wisdom. Man was at peace with God, and with



every beast, and bird, and sea creature; there was no war, no violence, or destruction, and man could rest in perfect safety; there was not a sign of physical decay to be found throughout it; it was in the perfection of beauty, and God was the joy of it (Psalm 48:2). We're told that it was His hand whereby He caused "to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." (Gen. 2:9) This was the principle of the covenant He created man in, when He declares "Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety." (Leviticus 25:18-19)

God designed us to be in covenant with Him and therein was our safety and prosperity in abiding in His way of life. Man was told not to eat the fruit of the tree whereof if he ate of it, "ye shall surely die." Yet man came against the Word of his Creator, and through sin, he forsook His covenant He made with him; this affected not only the whole Adamic race, but also the earth from which he came, of which he was a representative; the earth, revealing the startling condition of the Adamic race, also underwent the separation and felt the effects of the curse of their sin. The earth, like a mirror,

has frighteningly testified of the condition of man upon the earth. As through sin, death passed upon all man, with its withering effects, even so, the earth withers and fades.

“The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.” (Isaiah 24:1-6)

While God’s hand caused every tree with its fruit to grow, even now, His hand, though rejected, has mercifully



The marks of God’s merciful hand have been witnessed.

sustained us. Man had forsaken the everlasting covenant through sin, and yet God still lent to him breathe, and caused to grow for him trees bringing their food. Like a husband whose wife rejects him and wants nothing to do with him, yet in care for her soul still supports her as he is able, even so has God done to the inhabitants of this earth if by any means, he can cause her to turn away from wickedness by beholding His goodness to the children of men: “And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and

wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.” (Hosea 2:7-8)

JOY TURNED TO MOURNING

With the increase of man’s wickedness, so the increase of separation from the life of God occurs, and the hand of God that is mercifully sheltering and taking care of humanity, being persistently rejected, is finally withdrawn. As separation occurs in the heart of the Adamic race through rebellion, the earth correspondingly is desolated. Famines, earthquakes, floods, violence in nature and in beast, and death are the portion and sure result. The earth and the beasts that dwell therein are corresponding signs that the marriage covenant with our Creator and God has been broken. Thus the land mourns, as the hand of God that was unto life and prosperity, seems to be upholding the death and desolation occurring, even as he upholds man in his wretched condition of sin and death.

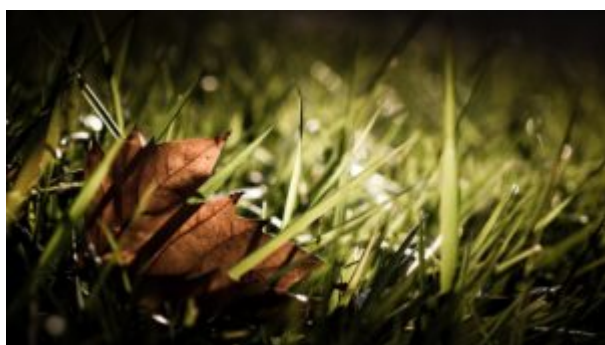
“How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.” (Jeremiah 12:4)

The land mourns, but the presence of God brings “fullness of joy” in “the paths of life” (Psalm 16:11); this joy of God’s presence through the Spirit is the same power by which He causes the trees to bear fruit. The restoration of the Spirit of God, through obedience to the law of God, prolongs the prosperity that exists upon the earth; this presence in the Spirit is referred to in the Scripture as rain. Like rain comes upon the earth, God pours out His Spirit of life upon man in accordance with the knowledge of Him:

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” (Hosea 6:3) The physical rain not being withdrawn from the

land is but a merciful manifestation upon the earth that His Spirit is being poured out still (Matt. 5:45), pleading with a people who despise his love and reject His calls to turn back to Him; moreover, physical rain is also an accompanied blessing of mankind's obedience to God, where He promises "rain in due season" (Leviticus 26:4); thus man's covenant with God binds corresponding blessings to the earth, and thus to humanity in general. By God's faithful children, who keep covenant with Him, nations are spared, blessings are bestowed which otherwise would be restrained, and wickedness is held in check upon the earth. It is thus that God may send showers of blessing upon the unjust.

Yet when wickedness prevails, and the righteous in the land are few, corresponding evils begin to take place, and the righteous are tried as Job was tried; the joy and power of God's presence is not largely known or understood, neither is



the spiritual rain of God's covenant given. "Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up,

and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men." (Joel 1:11-12) More than this, when wickedness prevails, Satan possesses more power to bring calamities and disasters upon the earth corresponding to the measure of man's wickedness (thereby showing allegiance to him rather than God); despite having this power, he is not permitted to try the servants of God without the permission of God, yet God will permit trials for the blessing of His children, and for the unfallen worlds and angels to know that man, when tempted, will yield themselves to obedience still, rather than to evil. Even as it was with Job (Job 1&2).

Christ, who went into the earth for man's sins, was made the curse for us (Gal. 3:13); therefore the curse that has devoured the earth is the same curse that has devoured the Son of God. The thorns which have sprung up as a result of the curse (Gen. 3:17-18) was the sign of the curse which crowned Prince Immanuel's brow for our sake. In the curse of sin bringing disease, decay, and death to man, as well as beast, and nature, all of it testifies



and reflects the piercing depths of suffering that fell upon the Son of God; every withering lily of the field, to the withering leaves of fall, to the vast sandy deserts of the Sahara (once a lush and vibrant land) all testify of the suffering of the Christ. In this striking illustration, the Son of God was to manifest the love of God the Father (1 John 4:9-10), and by His cross He was to reveal, in the very Face of the beauty of holiness, the suffering that the curse of sin has brought to the heart of God (2 Cor. 4:6); God, who beholds the corruption on the earth and His Spirit being withdrawn from man with the subsequent destructive curses that follow, reveals that "it grieved him at His heart" (Gen. 6:6).

Christ became as Adam, and bore all of man's sins and laid them in "the heart of the earth", and came forth from the earth and called "the second Adam", enjoining all men to the marriage covenant with God which was formerly broken, saying "I restored that which I took not away" (Psalm 69:4).

"And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand;..." (Isaiah 28:18) By virtue of what Christ does as one with the Adamic race, He declares the covenant will be restored to man, and blessings as they walk in obedience to the covenant He makes with us. It is chiefly this which justifies the ungodly by turning away their ungodliness, and thus sending rain upon those who His blood has justified, thus blessing the unjust who know not God, nor Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. Christ is to be

recognized as the Father of all of man's undeserved blessings, and channeled forth in the world by those who are obedient to the gospel.

"And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with



the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in

lovingkindness, and in mercies." (Hosea 2:16-19) "And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land...For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you." (Lev. 26:6-9)

However, it is not until sin and death are no more that the blessings of the everlasting covenant shall be fully restored. That man will be in faithful covenant to God, and the land, renewed by the creative power of God (Isaiah 65:17-18). Perfect peace and safety shall again reside to all the ends of the earth, but not by any measure shall it exist in the land until sin is destroyed at last (any message that declares otherwise is surely a deception [1 Thes. 5:3]). "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." (Isa 62:4-5) God is faithful, and keepeth covenant with those who love Him, and keep His commandments. Wait for this promised blessing, for when the Prince of heaven is reigning and has

put down all rule and authority, it shall surely come.

“And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.” (Ezekiel 34:25-27)

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:6-9)