

No More Curse

*“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.”
—Genesis 3:17*

BECAUSE OF DISOBEDI-ence to the divine law of God, the sentence of death was placed upon Father Adam. A second aspect of this judgment, however, also includes the curse which was placed

upon planet Earth and man’s environment. This has contributed greatly to the overall decline in health and vigor in the human family, which ends in the grave.

From the scriptural record, we read the first part of this judgment. “The LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”—Gen. 2:15-17

THE DYING PROCESS

There is an important dimension in this pronouncement that is also revealed in the scriptural record, and which puts the matter in proper

perspective. In connection with the instructions to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil God said, “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” *Young’s Literal Translation* renders this last phrase, “dying thou dost die,” pointing to the fact that a dying process would immediately begin if Adam sinned.

We know that Adam did not die on the very day this sentence was pronounced but lived for 930 years. The record states, “All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.” (Gen. 5:5) In God’s reckoning, a day is a thousand years long, during which Adam experienced the dying process. “Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (II Pet. 3:8) Therefore, Adam died within the period of a single day according to God’s method of measuring time.

THE EARTH CURSED

The second aspect of God’s judgment against sin and disobedience concerned the earth itself, and the very ground that Adam and his offspring would need to produce food to keep themselves alive. “Unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou

taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”—Gen. 3:17-19

IN SORROW

It would be difficult to describe the depth of sorrow that was experienced by our first parents during their life span which ended in death. The word “sorrow” means to worry, to grieve, or to be in pain, and was first used in connection with God’s judgment toward Mother Eve. “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” (Gen. 3:16) The psalmist explained in words we can all surely relate to: “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”—Ps. 90:10

DAVID’S LAMENT

The Psalmist David put into perspective the terrible results of sin, death, and the cursed earth that he had been experiencing. From one of his psalms, we read, “O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome

disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.”—Ps. 38:1-9

THE POLLUTED EARTH

The Prophet Isaiah speaks of the cursed earth, and that sinful man has polluted it. He wrote, “Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word. The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.”—Isa. 24:1-6, *New American Standard Bible*

PESTILENCES

When Luke, the Bible historian and Gospel writer, described events that would transpire at a future time, he included Jesus’ words that spoke of “famine and pestilence.” They would especially identify and distinguish a particular period as a time of great trouble upon the earth. (Dan. 12:1) This was foretold to come upon the people of the earth during the closing years of this “present evil world.”

(Gal. 1:4) We are now living, we believe, in this period of mankind's history, and are witnesses of the unprecedented events that so mark our time in Bible prophecy. Luke wrote, "Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."—Luke 21:11

MAN'S CONSTANT STRUGGLE

Throughout history, mankind has had to struggle against all kinds of adversity, and some of these many factors continue to cause the early loss of life among the human family. In many cases, this is derived from pestilence, plagues, and disease, and there have been various methods of carrying them, such as insects and rodents. Among humanity itself has come the spread of diseases, viruses, and many forms of sickness. Man has also fallen victim to famine and starvation, often caused by bad weather conditions such as droughts, flooding, or freezing conditions. These have been major factors, and have seriously affected the world's supply of food. Loss of crops has also occurred because of insect or weed infestation. The struggle against these and many other foes of the human family has been endless.

As the earth's population has increased dramatically during the past century and a half, the adversities that confront the human family have become more difficult to control. In the past, farms were smaller and pest infestation was more limited and easier to control. In recent decades, farms have become larger, thereby making it possible for pests, disease, and devastating weather events to advance over many acres of cropland.

SCIENTIFIC CONTROLS

Supplying food for the more than eight billion people now living on our planet is becoming ever more critical, and man is desperately trying to find solutions to many complex problems. One major example is pest control. Pesticides have been developed and are used widely to help save food crops from many types of insects and disease. Herbicides are also used to control the “thorns and thistles” that were introduced in Adam’s generation, and which continue to infest and inhibit the production of food. The divine sentence of the cursed earth is a continuing reality.

The use of pesticides has increased crop production and in many cases has ensured a higher quality of produce. However, pesticides are also toxic chemicals that are specifically designed to kill harmful insects, and some of these products have caused severe problems when they are consumed by humans. In the case of animal food production, drugs such as antibiotics and hormones are being used to increase growth and cut down on feed consumption. Residues of these drugs can also be hazardous to humans. The level of harm from exposure to pesticides, as well as animal antibiotics and hormones, is therefore related to the concept that the more you consume, greater is the risk.

MODERN CHALLENGES

The challenge is to balance a reliable, high quality food supply with the need to protect people from unnecessary exposure to chemicals. The limits for human consumption have a narrow margin for safety, and past experience has shown that a pesticide that

may be initially thought as safe for human consumption may have undesirable effects. The chemical “DDT” is one such historical example because of its environmental persistence and ability to accumulate in body fat. As a result, the use of DDT was banned in the United States in 1972, and in the rest of the world in 2004. However, it is still used in some parts of Africa, Asia, and South America.

Antibiotics are drugs that are designed to kill bacteria but are also used in animal food production to promote growth and cut down the amount of feed required. Overuse of these drugs increase the possibility of breeding antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria. Control of antibiotics is required to help reduce the amount of antibiotic residue left behind in meat products.

In a recent development, the H5N1 “Bird Flu” virus has decimated the poultry industry over the last three years. In the United States alone, it is estimated that 148 million chickens have been euthanized since 2022 to try and contain the spread of the virus. Thankfully, only a very small number of cases have been reported among humans, and the virus does not spread from person to person. However, all have been affected by shortages of eggs and other related food items, and prices have escalated greatly.

Thus we see that in spite of the development of chemicals, hormones, and other farming advances which our forefathers never heard of, the struggle against the age-long pest population, weeds, and disease continues. This is strong evidence that the curse placed upon our planet Earth as a result of sin and death has not yet been lifted.

The earth and its people are cursed because of disobedience to God, and the reality of that condemnation rings ever more clearly in our day. “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”—Gen. 3:16,17

NATURAL CONTROL

Among scientists, some have called attention to the fact that certain species of helpful insects or birds may be used to control others that are harmful and destroy food crops. Using natural insect control and organic pest control methods to prevent harmful insects from infestation is, they say, preferable to having to kill them with insecticides.

Natural control can have positive and negative effects. Most of the time control is introduced to an area to protect it from a harmful and invasive pest that dwells there. The control is introduced to lessen the competition among the invasive species. However, the introduced control species does not always target the intended pest population only. Control agents that are not restricted to a single species, or a small range of species, do not always make good biological control agents, and may become invasive species themselves. Numerous cases of such unintended consequences are well known to have occurred over the last several decades.

Other cases have proven more beneficial. The praying mantis is known to devour huge quantities of harmful insects every day. The ladybug will also

eat mites and aphids that often attack fruit trees. Finding and using natural methods may sometimes be as easy as introducing some of these natural enemies such as parasites, predators, pathogens, or competitors into a food crop. Other helpful predators include spiders that are also able to control pest populations.

Some plants such as dill or basil repel unwanted bugs, while others attract helpful insects such as butterflies. Diseased plants attract unwanted pests more readily than do healthy plants. Therefore, it is important to keep the plants healthy by building up the soil with organic fertilizer, mulch, and compost. Introducing crop rotation is another positive method. Planting different varieties of crops each year in the same plot of land will also inhibit a buildup of certain harmful insects and weeds.

With further research and scientific experiments, biological control could potentially help lessen future pest infestation of the world's food crop production. Biological control is being used more today and may hopefully reduce the use of many pesticides and herbicides.

DIVINE WISDOM MANIFEST

Despite progress in his efforts, man has never been able to invent, or develop, any type of control or method that will completely eliminate harmful insects, weeds, pests, or crop and animal disease. The problems are too widespread and varied wherever the human food supply is grown. However, scientists point out the simple fact that the earth would have been totally overrun by insects and weeds long ago except for the many species of

helpful birds and insects that eat the unwanted species, and this has helped keep the infestation under control to a limited extent.

Thus is seen the great wisdom and controlling hand of a loving Heavenly Father that will not allow the total devastation of all flesh upon the earth. Without his guidance all flesh would have been destroyed long ago, and there would no longer be any hope for the perfecting of the sin-sick and dying human race. God created the earth to be inhabited, and it will never pass away. From the words of Solomon, we read, “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.” (Eccles. 1:4) God has given man certain limited insights into basic physical laws and principles, but all knowledge comes from him. “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.”—vss. 9,10

GOD’S POWER

The marvelous working power of God may be employed to bring either a curse or a blessing. This was demonstrated in the life of the nation of Israel when they were in bondage to Egypt. Israel’s bondage to Pharaoh serves to illustrate mankind’s bondage to sin and death under Satan. Israel’s release from bondage pictures the human family being released from the sentence of death by means of the redemptive work of Jesus.—Rom. 5:18,19; Heb. 9:12,15; I Tim. 2:5,6

In the case of ancient Israel, God brought forth upon Egypt the plagues as recorded in Exodus, chapters 7 to 12. First, water was turned to blood, and then came the frogs. Next came the plagues of lice, flies, and the disease of murrain, an infectious disease affecting cattle and other animals. Then were the boils, and the hail accompanied with storms and darkness. All of the plagues were under the control of God, and he was the only one who could stop them. During this time, God's power was also used to spare the nation of Israel. (Exod. 8:22,23; 9:4-7) The psalmist also provides an overview account showing that it was only by God's power that the people of Israel were freed from their bondage in Egypt.—Ps. 78:44-51

REVERSING THE CURSE

The Prophet Isaiah foretold God's future plan to bring blessings to all mankind. He wrote, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God." (Isa. 35:1,2) When describing this wonderful scene in symbolic language, Isaiah also wrote, "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes."—vss. 6,7

In reference to this future time under the administration of Christ and his faithful followers of this present age, the psalmist also said, “Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.”—Ps. 65:9-13

A COVENANT OF PEACE

Our loving Heavenly Father will establish a “covenant of peace” with the people through the greater “David,” Christ Jesus and his faithful followers, as recorded by the Prophet Ezekiel. “I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. 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.”—Ezek. 34:23-27

NO MORE CURSE

All the obedient of mankind will be restored to a perfected planet Earth, and the curse that has existed since our first parents fell into sin will be no more. The reign of Christ will be set up with power and authority over the affairs of the world and its people. John the Revelator wrote of God’s vision that speaks of this wonderful hope for the human family, and brings it into perspective. “He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.”—Rev. 22:1-3

NO MORE SORROW

The ultimate plan and purpose of our loving Heavenly Father is to restore the obedient of his human creation to perfect life here on a restored, perfected earthly home. The prophet of God looked down the long stream of time from his day and described this wonderful scene. He wrote, “The redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be

upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”—Isa. 51:11

John the Revelator, too, was moved by the Holy Spirit of God, and wrote, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”—Rev. 21:4-6 ■