

# Impact of Man on Nature

## Run to the Hills!

From the age of a young child I have known of the story of Daniel two that predicts the cataclysmic end of this world. The rise of four world empires followed by the division of ten kingdoms and the rise of the little horn power to face judgment, press upon us the nearness of the stone that will smash the image, and establish the heavenly kingdom. The themes found in Matthew 24 were deeply impressed upon me where Jesus lays out His response to the question, "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matt 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Never too far from my mind has been the thought of fleeing the larger towns to the smaller villages in preparation for running to the hills in order to escape the death decree enacted against those who refuse to follow the law enforcing Sunday observance.

It is no time now for God's people to be fixing their affections or laying up their treasure in the world. The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation, in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath, will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Instead of spending our means in self-gratification, we should be studying to economize.-- Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 464, 465.

God's people are granted a period of time in the lead up to these final events to come into the likeness of Jesus and receive the seal of God. What gives them time to do this are those precious angels holding back the winds of strife.

Rev 7:1-3 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. (2) And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, (3) Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

What exactly are in these four winds?

John sees the elements of nature--**earthquake, tempest, and political strife**-- represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. TM 444

## The Relationship between Man and Nature

Within the list of what Ellen White calls the elements of nature are things both of related to man and the creation itself. Earthquake is obviously something directly related to the earth. Tempest is usually associated with the same but political strife is definitely something solely human in nature.

Are these elements in the creation and man simply separate events happening at the same time or is there a relationship between the strife of men and the convulsions of nature? Is it possible that when we are at peace within ourselves and in our communities that the earth itself is influenced in some way? Conversely if we are conflicted and turbulent within ourselves and our relationships, could the earth also be affected by this?

Psa 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

The Bible says that those who love and therefore keep the law will experience peace. Such peace only comes from the Spirit of God.

Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

This relationship between the peaceful Spirit of God in connection to the keeping of the Law of God manifests itself in the prosperity of the soul.

Psa 1:1-3 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (3) **And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**

The Psalmist uses the illustrations of nature to describe this prosperity. As the Spirit of God fills the soul, it brings forth good nourishing fruit thus positively affecting all around him.

The blessings and cursings laid out in the book of Deuteronomy show there is a direct link between walking within the Law of God and the prosperity of crops, the tranquillity of the environment, and protection from wild beasts.

Deut 28:1-12 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt **hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day**, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: (2) And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. (3) **Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.** (4) **Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.** (5) **Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.** (6) Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. (7) **The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.** (8) **The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.** (9) The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, **if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.** (10) And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. (11) **And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee.** (12) The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

It is natural to think that when reading this passage that God is saying "If you do the right thing, then I will give you a treat; I will reward you." When we look closer we see that the blessings that come to the land are flowing forth from the peace that is in the hearts of those who love the law of God. The law of course is a reflection of the character of God. To love the law is to have the character of God.

In setting aside the law of God, men know not what they are doing. **God's law is the transcript of His character.** It embodies the principles of His kingdom. He who refuses to accept these principles is placing himself outside the channel where God's blessings flow. COL 3:5.3

Do you see the simplicity of this process? Within the law of God are the principles of His kingdom. When we walk in these principles, the joy, peace and gladness of heart that comes to us flows onto everything connected to us. God does not arbitrarily make good things happen because we show we do the right

thing. The spirit of tranquillity in us flows upon our families, our fields, and our environment. This is natural law.

The effect of the character of man upon the earth is vividly portrayed by Isaiah in the following passage:

Isa 24:4-6 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. (5) **The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.** (6) **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.

Look at verse five from a few different translations.

Isa 24:5 (NLT) **The earth suffers for the sins of its people,** for they have twisted God's instructions, violated His laws, and broken His everlasting covenant.

Isa 24:5 (ASV) **The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof;** because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.

Isa 24:5 (TLB) **The land is defiled by crime;** the people have twisted the laws of God and broken his everlasting commands.

The Everlasting Covenant is the plan designed by God to change our hearts toward Him. Through the gift of His Son, our hard hearts are melted by His love and in repentance for our hardness we receive His Spirit which enables us to walk in His law.

It is well known that prolonged stress will break down our bodies. A person consumed with anger eventually will damage his body. The prolonged sorrow of guilt or the weight of depression erodes our health.

Psa 32:1-3 (NIV) Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (2) Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. (3) **When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.**

David states that his bones began to waste under the burden of guilt through transgression. This groaning of the soul finds an echo in the wider creation.

Rom 8:20-22 (NIV) For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. (22) We know that **the whole creation has been groaning** as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Paul clearly tells us that the entire creation was subjected to frustration but not by its own choice. It was placed in the bondage of decay through the actions of man. As man groans because of his sins, so also the earth groans under the defilement of men.

## **The Curse of Sin from the Beginning**

If we examine the story of the fall of man we learn more of how the earth is affected by the thoughts and actions of men.

Gen 3:17-19 And 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; (18) **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;** (19) 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.

There are a number of elements in this passage to consider.

1. Harkening to the voice of his wife
2. The eating from the tree
3. The curse upon the ground causing thorns and thistles
4. This was for the sake of Adam

In submitting to his wife against the will of his Creator, Adam rebelled.

1 Cor 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

1 Tim 2:12-13 (NLT) I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly. (13) For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve.

Gen 2:22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Adam was placed in a position of headship over his wife. She had come from him and received her life through him. The woman was not to take the position of authority to teach her husband but the husband was to prayerfully and gently lead his wife. Adam and Eve were made in this image of God and His Son. This is the Divine Pattern.

1 Cor 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

As the Father is the source and His Son is the channel, so Adam was the earthly source and his wife, Eve, was the channel. For more on this subject see the booklet *The Divine Pattern of Life*. When Eve took the position of authority to teach her husband concerning the tree of knowledge it changed the nature of their relationship. The act of tempting her husband to eat the fruit of the tree was an act of rebellion. In listening to the voice of his wife, Adam embraced this rebellion. Eve was deceived but Adam knew exactly what he was doing. This act of rebellion instantly created a new world order.

Under the curse of sin all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God. **When God made man He made him rule over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule. Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree.** PP 59, 60

## The Dominion of Man over the Earth

Here we find something amazing. All of creation was subject to Adam in the beginning. His dominion was directly connected to his submission to God. This connection between man and the earth is clearly revealed in the creation story.

Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, [H127] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Gen 2:9 And out of the ground [H127] made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Gen 1:26-28 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and **let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over**

every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (28) **And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Man is made of the earth. He was taken from the ground. All fruits, flowers, trees, plants were also taken from the earth. Adam and Eve were given dominion over the creation. Verse 27 reminds us of the pattern in which Adam and Eve were created – the image of God and His Son.

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. **And now God says to his Son, "Let us make man in our image."** 1SP 24,25

This image of source-channel holds the key to the blessings that would cause fruitfulness to multiply. The subduing of the earth was to be done in the similar principle that Christ stilled the storm on the sea.

Mark 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

The great calm in the soul of Christ came upon the creation. As the second Adam, Christ manifested His dominion over the earth and subdued it through His peaceful Spirit that was in harmony with the law of His Father.

When Adam rebelled against God and ate the fruit, the precious garment of light that covered Adam and Eve vanished. This was an immediate sign that Adam had removed himself from the covering of God and stood independent from Him.

A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. **This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence.** Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. **But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed.** Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering. COL 310.4

Every time we sin we manifest a spirit of rebellion. This spirit of rebellion is then reflected in the earth. When man rebels against God, the earth rebels against man. The convulsions of the earth, the forceful torrents of water that break their boundaries and sweep away men and animals to their death are simply reflections of the rebellion of man. Every time a child defies its parents, the earth is affected. Every time a wife overrules her husband the earth is impacted. Every time a man abuses his wife and children the earth is abused and stores up the spirit of revolt; the greater the abuse of men, the greater the eventual revolt of the earth.

We come back to the third point. Thorns and thistles began to grow in the creation. Did God create these especially to cause man pain? No the sharpness of the thorns that grew on the plants was simply a reflection of the sharpness of the tongue and spirit of man. The sharper man became the more the thorns would grow to warn him of the hardening of his heart.

In plant morphology, thorns, spines, and prickles, and in general spinose structures (sometimes called spinose teeth or spinose apical processes), **are hard, rigid extensions or modifications of leaves, roots, stems or buds** with sharp, stiff ends, and generally serve the same function: physically deterring animals from eating the plant material. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thorns,\\_spines,\\_and\\_prickles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thorns,_spines,_and_prickles)

God did not create thorns. The hardened rebellious spirit of man fell upon the earth and transformed the soft and gentle leaves into an instrument of pain and sorrow. The gentle lion, bear and tiger were now filled with the rebellious spirit of man and now Adam and His descendants would fear for their lives from the creatures that were once under their dominion.

## The Lost Dominion

When Adam ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in rebellion against God, he relinquished his dominion to Satan. This arch rebel not only usurped the dominion of Adam and Eve but also the entire earth.

**Continually they were reminded also of their lost dominion.** Among the lower creatures Adam had stood as king, and so long as he remained loyal to God, all nature acknowledged his rule; **but when he transgressed, this dominion was forfeited. The spirit of rebellion, to which he himself had given entrance, extended throughout the animal creation.** Thus not only the life of man, but **the nature of the beasts, the trees of the forest, the grass of the field, the very air he breathed,** all told the sad lesson of the knowledge of evil. Ed 26.4

Not only had man come under the power of the deceiver, **but the earth itself, the dominion of man, was usurped by the enemy.** Bible Echo July 15, 1893

This means that the level to which Satan can control the elements of the earth is directly related the level of rebellion in man against God. The level of this rebellion is directly measured through the amount of resistance to the law of God. As we discovered earlier:

Isa 24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

Notice carefully the sequence of this statement in Great Controversy which end with the text from Isa 24:5 we just quoted.

Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. **He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows.** When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble succeeding another as in a moment. **It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them in from the power of the destroyer. But the Christian world have shown contempt for the law of Jehovah; and the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would—He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law and teaching and forcing others to do the same.** Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard. He will favor and prosper some in order to further his own designs, and he will bring trouble upon others and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them.

While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. **Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce [590] tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.** Destruction will be upon both man and beast. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away," "the haughty people . . . do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." Isaiah 24:4, 5 GC 589,590

## Satan's Power Increased through Man's Lawlessness

It is Satan who exercises his power through tornadoes, earthquakes, floods and storms. He is limited by God through the hedge of protection of the law. The further a nation moves away from the law of God the greater control Satan has to bring destruction on the earth.

The Lord's curse is upon the earth, upon man, upon beast, upon the fish in the sea, and **as transgression becomes almost universal the curse will be permitted to become as broad and as deep as the transgression** (Letter 59, 1898). - {1BC 1085.9}

God is forced to remove His protection through the decision of men to reject Him. When men determine to block God from their minds and set themselves to oppose Him and resist Him in open defiance, the Lord in grief respects their decision and lets them have the leader they have chosen.

**God keeps a reckoning with the nations.** Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance. **In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy.** Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. **He will say to the angels, "No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work."** This time is right upon us. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the earth. **When the angel of mercy folds her wings and departs, Satan will do the evil deeds he has long wished to do. Storm and tempest, war and bloodshed,—in these things he delights, and thus he gathers in his harvest.** And so completely will men be deceived by him that they will declare that these calamities are the result of the desecration of the first day of the week. From the pulpits of the popular churches will be heard the statement that the world is being punished because Sunday is not honored as it should be. And it will require no great stretch of imagination for men to believe this. They are guided by the enemy, and therefore they reach conclusions which are entirely false. RH, September 17, 1901

So there is a clear connection between the lawlessness of man and the calamities of nature that destroy. Sadly many people believe that God is the one who personally destroys sinners through earthquake, fire and flood. Yet when men die of a drug overdose, or from alcohol or cigarette use, no one blames God for this. It is understood that if you violate the laws of your body, you will die. This same law applies to the natural world because the earth is directly influenced by the spirit of men that live on the earth.

**Under the supposed wisdom of men, nature is placed where she becomes a destructive agency.** The good things which were given to man only to bless him are converted into a curse. By the use of wine and liquor men become slaves to appetite. God does not interpose and work a miracle to convert evil into good; for **He has laid all nature under His eternal laws.** Let there be no peace to the wicked, He says. Let everything be at war with him. And nature responds, "There shall be none." **If man takes himself in his own hands, to do with himself as he pleases, if he works against God and nature, his indulgences will become to him the instruments of death.** 3MR 344.2

## The Example of Egypt

This is exactly how the plagues fell upon Egypt. The violation of the laws of nature causes the plagues to fall upon this nation.

Under the hand of God, nature ministers against the transgressors of God's laws. She holds her destructive elements in her bosom till the time when they shall break forth to destroy man and purify the earth. **When Pharaoh defied God through Moses and Aaron saying, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice. . . ? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go," nature expressed her sympathy with her injured Maker,**

and cooperated with God to avenge the insult to Jehovah. **All Egypt was laid desolate because of the stubborn resistance of Pharaoh.**—Letter 209, 1899.

God did not destroy Egypt personally. He actually sent Moses to appeal to Pharaoh to let them keep a feast.

Exo 5:1-3 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. (2) And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. (3) And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

What was so significant about keeping a feast that should prevent the falling of the plagues on Egypt?

Lev 26:1-6 Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. (2) **Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary:** I am the LORD. (3) **If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;** (4) **Then I will give you rain in due season,** and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. (5) And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. (6) **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.

The feast that Israel was instructed to keep was the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. If you study carefully the offerings that were given during the feasts you will notice something very interesting. The amounts of flour and oil are found in Numbers chapter 28 and 29.

Sacrifice	Flour	Oil
Daily	4.4kgs	1.8 ltrs
Sabbath	8.8kgs	3.6 ltrs
New Moon	37.4kgs	15.3 ltrs
Unleavened Bread	266.2kgs (30 x Sab. offerings)	108.9 ltrs
Seventh Month Feasts	869kgs (~100x Sab. offerings)	359.2 ltrs

The flour and oil were mixed together to make an unleavened bread. This bread was a symbol of Christ and the presence of His Spirit that comes during these times of refreshing, Acts 3:19. For more details on this please read *Sabbath Fountain* and *Living Bread from Heaven*.

If Pharaoh had allowed Moses and Israel to go and keep the feast, they would have accessed a large blessing of the Spirit. This blessing would have subdued the hearts of the people and had a direct effect on the land. Through the Sabbath blessing, the Lord would have been enabled to say to the rebellious earth – “peace be still.”

Why was the earth in rebellion? Egypt had received the opportunity to know the true God through the ministry of Joseph a few hundred years earlier. Rather than acknowledge the true God they did the following:

Rom 1:18-23 (NLT) But God shows His anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. (19) **They know the truth about God because He has made it obvious to them.** (20) For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything



God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (21) **Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship Him as God or even give Him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like.** As a result, their minds became dark and confused. (22) **Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.** (23) **And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.**

Egypt entered fully into idolatry and worshipped many of the creatures and objects of nature. Secondly, Egypt became perverted in their appetites. Paul explains this sequence as he continues in Romans 1.

Rom 1:24-27 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. (25) They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator Himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. (26) **That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other.** (27) **And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.**

Idolatry leads to perverted sexuality. Adultery, homosexuality, paedophilia and bestiality are practices that directly impact the earth.

Lev 18:3 (NLT) So do not act like the people in Egypt, where you used to live, or like the people of Canaan, where I am taking you. You must not imitate their way of life.

What are the things that the Lord commanded Israel not to do that these nations were doing?

1. Incest. Leviticus 18:6-18
2. Sex during time of a woman's period. Leviticus 18:19
3. Adultery. Leviticus 18:20
4. Offering their children to idols. Leviticus 18:21
5. Homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22
6. Bestiality. Leviticus 18:24

These were the practices of Egypt as indicated in Lev 18:3. These practices were the result of their idolatry as indicated in Romans 1. What is the combined result of these things?

Lev 18:25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, **and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.**

How did the land vomit out the inhabitants? Through the plagues that fell upon them. The Israelites were not exempt from some of the Egyptian practices, some of them worshipped false gods and engaged in their rituals.

Many years had the children of Israel been in servitude to the Egyptians. Only a few families went down into Egypt, but they had become a large multitude. **And being surrounded with idolatry, many of them had lost the knowledge of the true God and had forgotten His law. And they united with the Egyptians in their worship of the sun, moon, and stars, also of beasts and images, the work of men's hands.** SR 112.1

Through all these abominations Satan was enabled to take control of the elements and was ready to destroy Egypt and the Israelites together. Moses tried to instruct Israel to return to the keeping of the Sabbaths.

In their bondage the Israelites had to some extent lost the knowledge of God's law, and they had departed from its precepts. **The Sabbath had been generally disregarded, and the exactions of their taskmasters made its observance apparently impossible.** But Moses had shown his people that obedience to God was the first

condition of deliverance; and the efforts made to restore **the observance of the Sabbath had come to the notice of their oppressors.** PP 258

## The Importance of the Sabbath

Satan aroused the anger of Pharaoh when Israel started to keep the Sabbath and so he made them make bricks without straw.

Exo 5:5-7 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest [Sabbath H7673] from their burdens. (6) And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, (7) Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

Through the keeping of the Sabbath and the feasts, a way was provided to bring the Spirit of Christ (who is the Lord of the Sabbath, Matt 12:8) to subdue the rebellion stored up in nature and calm it again.

Exo 5:3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

We see the combination of famine and sword listed. The use of the sword comes from the stirred up passions within man. The pestilence comes as a result of the rebellion of man against the law of God.

The Sabbath itself shows us a connection between man and the earth through the land Sabbath that was to occur every seven years.

Lev 25:3-5 **Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; (4) But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD:** thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. (5) That which groweth of its own accord of the harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.

Man and his animals (ox, ass) are to rest every seventh day and the earth is to rest every seventh year as a reflection of the rest of man. So the Sabbath principle itself tells us that there is a rest principle not only for man but also for the animals and the land itself.

In the last days of earth's history there will be a repeating of aspects of the history of Egypt. There will once again be plagues that fall upon the earth. This time there will be seven of them. See Revelation 16.

Like in the days of Moses, the Sabbath will be presented as the channel of God's blessing to bring the Spirit of Christ to subdue the earth. We notice the sequence of events that take place at this time.

I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and **proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists,** [just as Pharaoh was enraged] **as they could not refute the Sabbath truth.** And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. I saw **the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land.** [just as Moses told Pharaoh - Ex 5:3] The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed.

In the time of trouble we all fled from the cities and villages, but were pursued by the wicked, who entered the houses of the saints with a sword. They raised the sword to kill us, but it broke, and fell as powerless as a straw. Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. The sun came up, and the moon stood still. The streams ceased to flow. Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against

each other. But there was one clear place of settled glory, whence came the voice of God like many waters, which shook the heavens and the earth. The sky opened and shut and was in commotion. The mountains shook like a reed in the wind, and cast out ragged rocks all around. The sea boiled like a pot and cast out stones upon the land. And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. EW 33,34

## The Seal of God

This brings us back to the work of the angels in Revelation 7.

Rev 7:1-3 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. (2) And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, (3) **Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.**

What is the Seal of God?

Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his **Father's name [character] written in their foreheads.**

Where is the character of God found?

In setting aside the law of God, men know not what they are doing. **God's law is the transcript of His character.** It embodies the principles of His kingdom COL 305

What is the sign or mark of God within the law that reveals His ownership of them?

Eze 20:20 And hallow **my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign** [signal, monument, mark H226] **between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.**

The value of the Sabbath as a means of education is beyond estimate. **Whatever of ours God claims from us, He returns again, enriched, transfigured, with His own glory** [character]. The title that He claimed from Israel was devoted to preserving among men, in its glorious beauty, the pattern of His temple in the heavens, the token of His presence on the earth. **So the portion of our time which He claims is given again to us, bearing His name and seal. "It is a sign," He says, "between Me and you; . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord;"** because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 31:13; 20:11. **The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge;** it recalls man's primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God's purpose to re-create us in His own image. {Ed 250.1}

**The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted.** When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, **the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator.** While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, **the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.** {GC 605.2}

The seal of God is the fullness of His Spirit transforming the character of the believer. This process is intimately linked to the Sabbath because this is the day upon which the fullness of the Spirit of God is given to sanctify His people.

## Christ Carries the Curse on the Earth

What is it that enables the angels to hold back the winds of strife? To answer this we need to come back to the first symbols of the curse manifested in nature.

Gen 3:17-18 And 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; (18) **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;**

It is no accident that as Christ stood before Pilate, He wore a crown of thorns.

John 19:1-5 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. (2) **And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,** (3) And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. (4) Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. (5) **Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns,** and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

Christ carries the curse that came upon this world.

Gal 3:13 **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:** for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

As soon as the spirit of rebellion in the heart of Adam began to fall upon the earth, Christ took upon Himself the curse. He has worn the crown of thorns from the fall of man. He was slain from the foundation of the world. Rev 13:8

Christ is set forth before men only as the crucified Redeemer; and since that from which men need to be saved is the curse, He is set forth as bearing the curse. **Wherever there is any curse, there is Christ bearing it. We have already seen that Christ bore, and still bears, our curse, in that He bears our sin. He also bears the curse of the earth itself, for He bore the crown of thorns, and the curse pronounced on the earth was, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth." Gen.3:18. So the whole creation, which now groans under the curse, has been redeemed through the cross of Christ.** Rom.8:19-23. E.J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings* (1900) p 120.

Do we begin to comprehend the magnitude of the cross of Christ? The spirit of rebellion in Adam would have instantly destroyed everything in the Garden of Eden unless Christ carried the curse and took the piecing thorns of Adam's nature upon Himself.

As they witnessed in drooping flower and falling leaf the first signs of decay, **Adam and his companion mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead.** The death of the frail, delicate flowers was indeed a cause of sorrow; but when the goodly trees cast off their leaves, the scene brought vividly to mind the stern fact **that death is the portion of every living thing.** PP 62.1

When Adam ate the fruit of the tree, he inhaled the spirit of Satan who is filled with hatred towards Christ. Without fully understanding his situation, Adam had within his heart the inclinations of a murderer. His heart had enmity towards God through his resistance to the Law of God.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

It was a shock to Adam to be asked to take the life of a lamb. It was the only way to show Adam the true state of his condition. God does not desire sacrifice and offering for sin (Ps 40:6) but He did need Adam to understand the full extent of his condition in order that he might repent.

The seeds of death within Adam ensured that death would be the sure result of every living thing. It was through his dominion of the earth that the earth would die. In order to preserve the beautiful garden home of Adam and Eve, the Lord had to remove Adam from it. The banishment was not a punitive action by God in retaliation; it was the love of God for Adam that He wanted to preserve the Garden for him.

Transported with joy, he beholds the trees that were once his delight—the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. **He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for. His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it.** The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the Paradise of God. **Then he casts his glittering crown at the feet of Jesus and, falling upon His breast, embraces the Redeemer.** He touches the golden harp, and the vaults of heaven echo the triumphant song: "Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again!" **The family of Adam take up the strain and cast their crowns at the Saviour's feet as they bow before Him in adoration.** GC 648.1

If Adam had been allowed to stay in the garden, the pristine environment of the garden would have been marred. So in love, the Saviour took him from the garden to preserve it for him in the future.

Can we comprehend that without Christ carrying the curse of the crown of thorns that nature would immediately rise up and destroy us. The very principles that lay within the hearts of men that were manifested against Christ on the cross would manifest themselves in earthquake, tornado, fire, and pestilence.

Every time you enter into nature and take your rest in its bosom, this rest is provided by the Spirit of Christ. When you lie upon the grass beside gently flowing waters, you are cushioned by the cross. The spikes of nature that should pierce us are carried by our beloved Saviour. As we feel His peace in the creation, He feels our thorns. He does this freely for love of us. In every flower that buds and in every tree that springs forth to shade the earth, the cross of Christ is manifested for us.

To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. DA 660

When you feel a sense of peace as you walk by the ocean or near a waterfall; when you walk into a forest and feel refreshed by the gentle breeze, it is all because of Christ carrying the crown of thorns. It is all paid for by the cross. It is the power of the cross that gives the four angels their strength to hold back the winds of strife. These winds are stirred up by human rebellion against the law of God.

"CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The curse of the law, all the curse that ever was or ever can be, is simply because of sin. This is powerfully illustrated in Zech. 5:1-4. The prophet beheld a "flying roll; the length thereof . . . twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits." Then the Lord said to him: "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth." That is, this roll represents all the curse that is upon the face of the whole earth.

**And what is the cause of this curse over the face of the whole earth?**—Here it is: "For every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it." That is, this roll is the law of God, and one commandment is cited from each table, showing that both tables of the law are included in the roll. Every one that stealeth—everyone that transgresseth the law in the things of the second table—shall be cut off as on this side of the law according to

it; and every one that sweareth—everyone that transgresseth in the things of the first table of the law—shall be cut off as on that side of the law according to it.

Thus the heavenly recorders do not need to write out a statement of each particular sin of every man; but simply to indicate on the roll that pertains to each man, the particular commandment which is violated in each transgression. That such a roll of law does go with every man wherever he goes and even abides in his house, is plain from the next words: "I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house." And unless a remedy shall be found, **there that roll of the law will remain until the curse shall consume that man, and his house, "with timber thereof and the stones thereof;" that is, until the curse shall devour the earth in that great day when the very elements shall melt with fervent heat. For "the strength of sin" and the curse "is the law." 1 Cor. 15:56.**

But, thanks be to God, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." **All the weight of the curse came upon him, for "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."** He was made "to be sin for us, who knew no sin." And whosoever receives him, receives freedom from all sin, and freedom from the curse because free from all sin.

**So entirely did Christ bear all the curse, that, whereas, when man sinned, the curse came upon the ground, and brought forth thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:17, 18), the Lord Jesus, in redeeming all things from the curse, wore the crown of thorns, and so redeemed both man and the earth from the curse. Bless his name. The work is done.** "He hath redeemed us from the curse." Thank the Lord. He was made a curse for us, because he did hang upon the tree.

And since this is all an accomplished thing, freedom from the curse by the cross of Jesus Christ is the free gift of God to every soul on the earth. And when a man receives this free gift of redemption from all the curse, that roll still goes with him; yet, thank the Lord, not carrying a curse any more, but bearing witness to "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." Rom. 3:21, 22. For the very object of his redeeming us from the curse is "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." That blessing of Abraham is the righteousness of God, which, as we have already found in these studies, can come only from God as the free gift of God, received by faith.

And as "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" and as "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," then he has also redeemed us from the works of the law, which, being only our own works, are only sin; and has, by the grace of God, bestowed upon us the works of God, which, being the works of faith, which is the gift of God, is only righteousness, as it is written: **"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6:29. This is rest indeed—heavenly rest—the rest of God. And "he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Heb. 4:10.** Thus, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," and from the curse of our own works, that the blessing of Abraham, which is the righteousness and the works of God, "might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." And all this in order "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." And "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1-4.

Thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift of his own righteousness in place of our sins, and of his own works of faith in place of our works on the law, which had been brought to us in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." A.T. Jones *Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:10-12* RH December 26, 1899

## Storm on the Lake

The implications of this truth are far reaching. Take for instance the story of the storm on the lake of Galilee.

Matt 14:22-24 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. (23) And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. (24) But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

When Jesus had fed the 5000, the disciples saw their opportunity to make Him king. Jesus dispersed the crowd and commanded His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side. The disciples were not happy about it.

The disciples had that day witnessed the wonderful works of Christ. It had seemed that heaven had come down to the earth. The memory of that precious, glorious day should have filled them with faith and hope. Had they, out of the abundance of their hearts, been conversing together in regard to these things, they would not have entered into temptation. But their disappointment had absorbed their thoughts. The words of Christ, "Gather up the fragments, . . . that nothing be lost," were unheeded. Those were hours of large blessing to the disciples, but they had forgotten it all. They were in the midst of troubled waters. **Their thoughts were stormy and unreasonable, and the Lord gave them something else to afflict their souls and occupy their minds. God often does this when men create burdens and troubles for themselves.** The disciples had no need to make trouble. Already danger was fast approaching. **A violent tempest had been stealing upon them, and they were unprepared for it.** It was a sudden contrast, for the day had been perfect; and when the gale struck them, they were afraid. They forgot their disaffection, their unbelief, their impatience. DA 380

No sooner had Jesus taken His place in the boat than the wind ceased, "and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." The night of horror was succeeded by the light of dawn. The disciples, and others who also were on board, bowed at the feet of Jesus with thankful hearts, saying, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God!" {DA 382.5}

Why did the violent tempest come upon them on the lake? Many people believe that God arbitrarily decided to send this upon them. This places the character of God in a false light. God allowed the storminess of their thoughts to provide an index in the creation. It is true that God allowed it, but He did not cause it. The disciples caused it through their stormy, doubting thoughts. Is it a coincidence that the Spirit of prophecy says their thoughts were stormy? As the disciples were thrashed around in the boat, it gave a perfect picture of how their minds were thrashing dangerously around in a depressed state because they were prevented from making Jesus king. As soon as Jesus stepped into the boat, the waves ceased and they were at their destination. When Christ comes into our hearts, the storm within us ceases and we are home. When the Spirit of Christ abides in us then the same things will happen. We will do greater works than these.

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, **as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** (39) **(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive:** for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

## Reading the Bible in a New Framework

When God's people are filled with His Spirit, the earth will be at peace with them. When they walk in His commandments they become as trees planted by a river of water. In this light we can see the cause and effect relationships that we would not have seen before.

Matt 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

The fact that nations rise against nation in anger causes famines, pestilence and earthquakes. The natural events are not random events but rather directly connected to the activities of man.

**Winds and earthquakes and tempests are not capricious outbreaks of unregulated mechanical forces. All nature is in the fullest sense under the control of physical law.** It is the expression of a higher will. "He holdeth the winds in His fists;" "He gathereth the waters in the hollow of His hands;" "He maketh the clouds His chariots;" "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth king forever." Let not human wisdom dethrone and defy the great Sovereign of the universe. "He that made the world, and all things that are therein," He is the sustainer. All nature is but the working out of the laws which He has made, a manifestation of His sovereign will.--Ms 10, 1906. 3MR 342.2

**It is a wonderful and grand fact that in the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unerring certainty. The seed sown will produce a harvest of its kind. So it is in human nature.** He that sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He who sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. If human beings would consider that they are making their own harvest, they would be careful what seed they sow.--Ms 104, 1898. 3MR 342.3

The famine that came upon Egypt in the days of Joseph was not a random event, it was directly related to the idolatry, wars, and immorality and breaking of the commandments of God. The story of the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues of Egypt and many others all are directly related to the dominion of man over the earth and the earth simply following the programmed laws of cause and effect.

In every moment of every day we owe our lives to the mediation of Jesus who breathes peace into our troubled earth. May we ever be thankful for this and walk in His commandments and statutes. May we be filled with the Spirit that we might subdue the earth and reclaim our dominion in Christ.