

A Biblical Defense of the  
Classic Christian  
Doctrine

# THE CURSE

J A S O N   B O O T H E

# The Curse of the Physical Creation: A Biblical Defense of the Historic Christian Doctrine

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*And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:17-19*

*When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” Genesis 5:28-29*

The opening chapters of Genesis present a physical world brought forth by the Word of God, declared good in every respect, and entrusted to Adam as the covenant head of humanity. Into this harmony, Scripture places the grave reality of the Fall, a historic and cataclysmic event that brought spiritual ruin and physical corruption to the entire created order. Genesis 3 plainly records that the consequences of Adam's transgression were not confined to the inner life of man; they extended outward into the realm over which he was given dominion. When Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he provoked the judgment of God, who declared, **“cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field”** (Genesis 3:17-18). This judgment touched Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the ground itself, demonstrating the far-reaching effects of human sin on the physical creation.

The classic Christian doctrine, therefore, insists that the physical world was subjected to futility and corruption as a direct result of Adam's fall. God's judgment upon Eve confirms this pattern. To her He said, **“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you”** (Genesis 3:16). The pain described is bodily and experiential, representing suffering encountered in the real world, not merely a metaphor for spiritual struggle. Likewise, Adam's

judgment concerns his labor within the physical realm. He is told not that his spiritual toil will increase, but that the very soil which once yielded freely will now resist him, bringing hunger, sweat, frustration, and eventual death. This understanding is reinforced generations later when Lamech names his son Noah, declaring, **“Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands”** (Genesis 5:29). Lamech clearly interprets the curse as something affecting the physical field he tills and the literal hardship his hands endure.

The broader Old Testament continues this theme, showing that when Israel disobeys God, the land suffers with them. Moses warns that if they stray, **“the heavens over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you shall be iron”** (Deuteronomy 28:23). The prophets echo this same pattern. Isaiah describes the earth as defiled because **“they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant”** (Isaiah 24:5). The physical environment participates in the consequences of moral rebellion. Similarly, Hosea laments that because of Israel’s sin, **“the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, and even the fish of the sea are taken away”** (Hosea 4:3). The effects of human sin ripple outward, resulting in disorder, devastation, and death throughout the created world.

This truth is powerfully affirmed in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul writes, **“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope”** (Romans 8:19-20). Paul is not speaking metaphorically of the church but of the entire created realm, which he says **“has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now”** (Romans 8:22). This groaning is not poetic language for a spiritual struggle; rather, it corresponds directly to the physical frustration introduced in Genesis 3. Creation waits for the resurrection of the body because the curse that rests upon it is tied to the bodily condition of mankind. Only when the children of God are fully and physically redeemed will creation itself be set free, **“that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God”** (Romans 8:21).

This historic Christian understanding, however, presents a challenge to theological systems like hyper-preterism, which tend to reinterpret the Fall and its consequences as purely spiritual realities that were reversed in the first century. From that perspective, the curse on the ground becomes metaphorical, death refers only to spiritual alienation, and the restoration of all things was realized at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Such a reading risks collapsing the grand sweep of biblical theology into a narrow, symbolic frame, stripping the physical world of its covenantal significance. This approach struggles to account for the plain language of Genesis, where the curse affects the ground, the body, and the daily labor of mankind. It is also difficult to reconcile with the testimony of the prophets, who describe literal drought, famine, and animal death as consequences of rebellion, or with Paul's words in Romans 8 about a creation still groaning under an observable bondage to corruption.

Furthermore, by reducing death to a spiritual concept, this view overlooks the Bible's clear testimony about physical mortality. The declaration, "**By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return**" (Genesis 3:19), deals undeniably with the dissolution of the body. Paul confirms this connection, teaching that "**as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead**" (1 Corinthians 15:21) and that the hope of believers is the resurrection of renewed bodies, not merely renewed spirits. To suggest that the restoration of creation is already complete is to deny the present reality of physical decay and the future hope of bodily resurrection.

The classic doctrine, rooted in the whole counsel of Scripture, preserves the unity and integrity of God's revelation. It affirms that the physical world, created good, was subjected to decay because the covenant head of humanity rebelled. It maintains that this subjection is still in effect and that all creation longs for a future liberation, which will coincide with the resurrection of the righteous. This view honors the grammar, syntax, and narrative of the biblical text without spiritualizing away the cosmic consequences of sin. The biblical witness is clear: sin entered the world through one man, and with it came death and decay that extend throughout creation. The Fall was physical as well as spiritual because humanity is both body and soul. Therefore, the redemption accomplished by Christ is also for both body and soul, culminating in the renewal of all things. The world groans now, but it groans in hope, waiting

for the day when the same God who once declared the ground cursed will declare all things new.

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