

REMOVAL OF THE CURSE

God did not create this world as a place where pain and suffering would be a normal fact of life. We are told in Genesis 3 that as a result of man's sin God placed a curse upon nature. The earth would bring forth thorns and thistles. There was to be enmity between a part of the animal creation and humanity.

In every part of nature signs of this curse are visible. Animals live upon other animals. Cruelty and suffering are widespread in the animal creation. The infirmity of the human body, with its weakness and its suffering, is part of this curse.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:18-23 that the day is coming when this curse will be lifted. He says, "*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*" (v.22) In verse 21 he declares that "*the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*" As we have already seen, the essential idea of the picture in Isaiah 11:6-9 is not peace in the heart but freedom from external danger. If taken literally the passage says that the animals will no longer be a threat to one another or to human beings. Paul's statements suggest very strongly that such a change will be accomplished and the earth restored to Edenic conditions.

THE TIME OF THE KINGDOM'S ESTABLISHMENT

Having noticed the strong evidence in the Old Testament that this earth is to experience a long period of complete peace and justice, we now ask two questions: 1. how is this to be brought about? 2. when is it to come? Although various Old Testament passages suggest the answer to these questions, there is comparatively little in the Old Testament that deals directly with them.

The Bible nowhere promises that the period of universal peace and justice is to be produced by the preaching of the Gospel.

Jesus did not say to His disciples: "You are to conquer the world for Christ; you are to establish the kingdom by your preaching." He said, "*You are to be witnesses unto Me.*" He told them that there would be wars and rumors of wars before the present age would end (Matthew 24:6).

Many passages in the Old Testament predicted the coming of