

Verse 23 gives us this striking metaphor: *And the heavens over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you shall be iron.* Anyone who has experienced a severe drought can understand the picture. The cloudless sky above seems as unyielding as bronze. The parched soil below becomes hard as iron.

In the context of this chapter, God warns that creation itself will participate in the judgment of the disobedient nation of Israel. This is not unprecedented. Adam was given dominion over all the plants and animals of the earth. His domain suffered when he sinned. God told him “*Cursed is the ground because of you*” (Genesis 3:17).

But Christ, the second Adam, came to redeem

creation along with fallen man. *For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:17). When He returns the curse upon creation will be lifted. *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 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. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now* (Romans 8:20-22).

Questions:

1. What would cause the curses here to be inflicted upon the people?
2. What are some general categories of curses?
3. How would these calamities affect Israel's neighbors?

4. Read verses 36 and 49. Did this ever happen?

5. What are the psychological effects mentioned here?

6. As Christians, do we face similar threats?

7. What does this chapter tell us about the Law?

8.