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### **Man's Supreme Destruction of The World**

For thousands of years, man has viewed itself as ruler of the earth. Now, we find ourselves in a time of great concern as our climate spirals beyond the boundaries of livability and environmentalists scramble to repair ecosystems that have long been robbed of balance. God grants humans dominion over Earth and its creatures in verse 1:28 of King James Version of Genesis, a verse that many might skim over with little consideration yet the catalyst of an immoral hierarchy that modern society is being forced to reckon with. This idea that humanity is authorized by God to sovereign and subdue other organisms has allowed people to overlook the morality of human interference in ecosystems, maltreatment of animals for comical purposes, and depletion of resources for the sake of indulgence for centuries. Now, we are confronted with the consequences of these actions just like the corrupt monarchs of the past, yet, unlike these ghosts, we are becoming increasingly aware of the slim window that exists before our hands are tied behind our backs and the kingdom is burning.

Humanity did not begin with man it began with a child. In verse 2:9, the tree that holds the knowledge of good and evil within the Garden of Eden is created. At this point in time, man does not harbor these understandings. Like a child, it has little to no awareness of the world around it and must learn from its parents, God. In fact, it is only when man defies God that they gain this knowledge, further exemplifying humanity's unreliability. Before even developing a sense of morality, man was appointed as ruler of the Earth. In their eyes, plants and animals were not complex organisms that meshed to create a beautiful balance of production, and predation, and symbiosis, and decomposition, and everlasting cycles that continue to feed one another; they were shiny new toys to play with and manipulate. Like a child naturally inclined to handle its possessions roughly, man mismanaged the Earth with little consideration of the

implications. Only in recent generations, because knees have been scraped and toys that once gleamed are showing their cracks, are we beginning to understand the consequences. Unfortunately, climate change, habitat destruction, extinction, and a warming globe are not as simple as a few scratches and bruises.

The natural world is not compatible with the corrupted human fabrication that is the divine right of kings. We all know that monarchies are unjust systems that have been overthrown and revolutionized for just reasons, and the hierarchy that man has interpreted from Genesis with itself placed above all other organisms is simply a skip and a hop away. When left to its own devices, nature strives for balance; it is resilient and unfettered. Each component of an ecosystem, living and nonliving, serves a specific role that contributes to the whole. When humans interfere with these natural processes, it wreaks havoc upon these delicate equilibriums. Concepts such as greed and cruelty are unique to humanity and are far from compatible with these harmonious ecological arrangements. In Genesis 3:5 and 3:6, it is the temptation of godly knowledge that causes Eve to defy God and eat from the tree, showcasing humanity's selfishness and lack of humility. When man believes that it can both exist outside of natural systems and tamper with them for the purpose of selfish whims, balance cannot exist. When the environment collapses under the weight of man's greed, humans are the ones who will inevitably suffer as nature will prevail, but not in time to save its illegitimate monarchs. Man is not God.

It is difficult to fathom an alternative to the dynamic between man and nature that we have known for centuries. However, if a simple interpretation is the cause of this strife, then what would our reality be if the application of dominion was fundamentally different?

Imagine a world where humans had interpreted Genesis 1:28 not as an invitation to hierarchy but as the privilege to choose between resources and protect the balance of nature. We could have simply been cultivators of the Earth rather than puppet masters, picturing ourselves as just another element in the intricate weaving of nature rather than a supreme ruler. How different our current state would be. Rather than scurrying to remedy animal extinctions, invasive species introductions, a warming climate, deforestation, and the atrocity of animal abuse, we could have never committed

these heinous acts in the first place. Human greed is a strange phenomenon and exists outside of the natural tendencies of self-interest found throughout nature. Our constant need for more is driving us deeper into these moral complications. Viewing Earth's other creatures with the reverence they deserve would have created a completely different framework for how humanity views and moves through the world. Through the lens of the religions of the book, we are all God's creations. This truth bonds us to other organisms and, if viewed this way from the beginning, could have established a harmonious discourse with nature.

Within recent decades, we have finally begun to reckon with our unjust dynamic with the natural world, a dynamic founded on a childlike understanding of our surroundings. Granted dominion over Earth's creatures before developing a sense of morality, man walked the Earth with little consideration of its impact. Positioning itself above all other organisms as the supreme ruler of nature, it viewed itself as god of the inferior species. This lack of acknowledgment of the complexities within nature and the subsequent mistreatment of the animals that inhabit it has created an imbalance. Nature is incompatible with humanity's corrupt sense of monarchy, and today, we see the effects of this disparity. If only man had interpreted its role in the world differently, how that reality would contrast with the one we face today. We exist in a period of limbo, a reevaluation of how we fit into the mesh of the Earth. Some stray behind in this confrontation of our wrong doings, while others recognize the slim window we have before it is too late, before humanity is the species dying off. Nature will prevail, but not in time to save us from our own destruction if no action is taken to remedy this millenniums long illegitimate rule.