

Sowing, Reaping, And Harvesting

The Scripture has this to say about the cycle of nature. “All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again” (Ecclesiastes 1:7 NIV).

Examples from Nature

There is a cycle to the elements in nature as seen in God’s great creation. Take a seed, for example. It is hidden away, ever so small, just waiting there beneath the sod of the earth. But at the appropriate time—when the earth begins to warm, the rain begins to fall and the sun begins to shine—the seed begins to grow roots. As the earth fertilizes the roots, a bud begins to form and peak out on the surface of the earth. In time, the plant grows to full blossom. Eventually it releases a fragrance, which attracts pollinators, bees and bugs. When the plant matures, it drops new seeds upon the ground. The seed, in turn, waits just below the surface until a new season begins.

Water is another example of recycling. Water constantly renews its purity by cycling itself from a liquid (or a solid) into a vapor and back again. The change to a vapor removes most impurities and allows water to return to Earth in its clean form.

The study of water or hydrology starts with the water cycle, the process by which water renews itself. Since the cycle is continuous, it doesn’t really have a beginning, but a convenient place to start studying it is with precipitation (rain, snow, sleet and hail). When precipitation falls to earth, several things can happen. It can be absorbed into the soil. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, this is called infiltration. This process allows water to seep into the earth and be stored underground as groundwater.

Precipitation can also become runoff, flowing into rivers and streams. Water can evaporate or it can be returned to the atmosphere by transpiration through plants. Precipitation can also be stored. An ice cap is a form of storage. In temperate climates, water is found in depression storage or surface water puddles, ditches and anywhere else that runoff water can gather. This is a temporary form of storage. Water will evaporate from the surface and infiltrate into the ground. It will be absorbed by plants and transpired back into the air. It will flow to other areas. This cycling of water is continuous.