

# The Bible on Climate Change

Lesson for Sunday, September 18, 2022

## Introduction:

- One of the hottest topics (pun intended) is climate change.
- Ask: What do you know about it? What are your thoughts? (Don't let this go too far!)
- Ask: How should Christian approach the environment and environmental issues?
- Undoubtedly, the greatest environmental event in history was the Flood. As the waters receded, Noah stepped into a different world.
  - The water canopy that had previously protected the earth was now gone.
  - Huge quantities of water added to the oceans to where now 71% of the earth's surface is water.
- Now Noah was faced with starting over. In recent weeks we have seen how his first priority was to worship (8:20) and this pleased the Lord (vs. 21).
- Then God makes a statement in verse 22 (read it). From verse 21 we notice that this was a statement made to Himself. He pledged to Himself that from that point forward, the seasons would come and go.
- What does this mean for you and me?

## Bible Study:

1. God is the Creator; We are His Stewards (Genesis 1)
  - a. In the first chapter of Genesis there are three important principles to note.
  - b. First, in Genesis 1:1, we read simply that God is the Creator of all that is. As with everything God does, He proclaimed His new creation as "very good" in verse 31.
    - i. This is an important truth we must keep in the front of our minds. This world is not ours; it is His. This is God's world and we're just living in it!
    - ii. This biblical truth must be the framework as we determine our role in this world.
  - c. Second, mankind was ordained by God to be His stewards of His creation (see vs. 27, 28 and 2:15).
    - i. Man was given "dominion" over the earth and all living things.
    - ii. "Dominion" means to rule, take charge, or to care for.
    - iii. This is the idea of stewardship. We are to care for the earth, its inhabitants and its resources.
    - iv. Remember: Man is not an autonomous ruler. We are to rule under the authority of God.
  - d. Third, God made the earth's resources for man and his use (vs. 29-30)
    - i. God made it all: oil, gas, coal, metals, timber, animals and even CO2.
    - ii. Man is to use but not abuse the environment.
  - e. These three principles are key to understanding how we are to approach the environment and the issues that stem from it.
2. Man has often failed in his stewardship
  - a. As important as Genesis 1 is, we must not forget Genesis 3. When man sinned, everything changed.
  - b. In many respects, man has often failed in his role as steward over God's creation.
  - c. One example: man has abused the earth: chemical dumps, burning rain forests, sewage in rivers, dumping barge loads of garbage into the sea, etc.

- d. Another example: man has distorted the truth about God and this world with pagan worldviews such as pantheism (the universe is god, Mother Earth, etc.). Paul described this in Romans 1:23 & 25.
  - e. Possibly the strongest example of violating Genesis 1 is the entire Theory of Evolution.
    - i. This idea denies the existence or even need of God.
    - ii. The world is nothing more than survival of the fittest.
3. The Truth About Climate Change
- a. If we get our thinking and direction from the nightly news, we will be confused. Scientists are divided when it comes to issues such as climate change.
  - b. Thankfully, the majority of us are not called to be scientists. We are called to be faithful to God and His Word.
  - c. What can we assume about our world from Scripture?
    - i. Genesis 8:22 – We have God’s Word that the earth will continue to operate as it has until He returns. In science, this is called *the Principle of Uniformity*. It states that the basic laws of nature and the basic processes of the earth will continue and can be predicted with reasonable certainty.
    - ii. Genesis 1:1 – God is in control. You may also reference Colossians 1:16-17. God created it all and God continues to sustain it all. We are in good hands.
  - d. Do these truths mean that we simply don’t have to worry about the environment? Absolutely not! Remember, we are stewards!
    - i. Often, Christians emphasize the general and minimize the specific.
    - ii. We attempt to debunk the grand narratives surrounding issues like climate change, but ignore the trash in our front yard.
  - e. APPLY: One of the easiest ways to apply this stewardship responsibility is to simply be a good citizen!
    - i. Pick up trash when you see it!
    - ii. Make sure you are taking good care of your “property.”
    - iii. This is why we work so hard at FBT to keep our property clean!
    - iv. As the Navy Seal once stated at a college graduation, “If you want to change the world, start by making your bed!”

Conclusion:

- As Christians, we are stewards not only of the environmental pollution, but also of the moral and spiritual pollution that surrounds us.
- Christians ought to be the best citizens in town. But we are to be concerned with not only the physical, but more importantly the spiritual climate. To paraphrase the Lord Jesus, “What good is it if man lowers his carbon footprint but loses his soul?”