

Series: God & Our Culture #1490

Title: Genesis 1, 2, 3, 6-9

The Environment: Created and Sustained by God

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. I hope you were with us last time as we heard the activist-environmentalists sounding the alarm that men and women are destroying this planet and we must all urgently do our part to “save planet earth.” Climate change, or what used to be more commonly called global warming, is such a serious threat that it’s become a matter of life and death. How should a Bible believing Christian respond to this? What do we believe about this earth, about how to care for it, and what is a biblical response to the alarmist’s charge that climate change is man and woman made and only man and woman have the power to stop what we, ourselves, began? Otherwise, it is pleaded, we are doomed to destruction.

We want to formulate a response that is *biblical*. Our foundation is *God’s Word*. And we want to formulate a response that is kind and gracious. That is, we have a desire to put forth our beliefs in a winsome way when in conversation with someone who is not a Christian. Before we can do that, we definitely need to have a very firm foundation that informs our minds and our mouths for what we can say in the conversations the Holy Spirit opens to us. In building such a response, we began last time in Genesis chapter 1. Genesis 1, verse 1 says, **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** And in Genesis 1, verse 31 which reads, **“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”**

From this we said that our starting point is to affirm that our hope for our planet is in the hands of the One who made it. We trust in the God who created everything and everyone to now sustain everything and everyone whom He has made. As Christians we have peace about the future of the earth and really the whole universe, because we personally know, love, and serve the One who made it all. God’s got the whole world in His hands.

Today let me add more flesh to the bone on this, so that it is clear why we are very hopeful that man and woman cannot destroy the earth. This will require me to summarize the events of Genesis 1, 2, and 3 so that I can get us over to Genesis 6 and following. If you think I move too quickly, fear not, in this series we will come back and look in more detail concerning what is given in a less detailed fashion now. Note: many of you within the sound of my voice know all this already, but have you thought about applying this in conversations you have with the panicking environmentalists?

In Genesis 1 God created in six, 24 hour days. On day one He made light and the earth. On day two He separated the waters above and below. On day three God made dry land and plants. On day four He created the sun, the moon, and the stars. Then, on day five God created flying creatures and sea creatures. And on day six God created land animals and the pinnacle of His creation: God made man and woman. As always, I want to urge you to read the Bible for yourself so you can see and feel the impact of how *awesome* the miracle of this creation was. Please read Genesis chapter 1. Oh, read it many times, friends!

In Genesis chapter 2 we read, not about a separate or second creation, rather we read about certain aspects to the Genesis 1 creation *in more detail*. And the key here is to read about how God made the first man and the first woman. And also the command God gave them in Genesis 2, verses 16 and 17 which says, **“The Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.’”** That is a very clear command. So did man and woman keep the command? To answer that, we turn to the next chapter, Genesis 3.

And we are not going to like this answer. I am reading Genesis 3, verse 6, **“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”**

The man and the woman disobeyed God and immediately spiritual death set in, with physical death to follow. God kept His promise, “you will surely die.” And now sin is in the world, and with it comes destruction and death. And by Genesis chapter 6 – just three chapters later – sin is so rampant among the human race that God intervenes. I am reading Genesis 6, verses 5-8, **“Then the Lord saw that the**

wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and [the Lord] was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.' ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."

God told this man Noah to build an ark. He did and he and his family, along with the animals God had chosen to preserve, entered that ark and God closed the door. Then, the Lord sent a flood over this whole earth. I am reading in Genesis 7 now, verses 17-24. **"Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. ¹⁸ The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹ The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.**

²⁰ The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. ²¹ All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; ²² of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. ²³ Thus [God] blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. ²⁴ The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days."

This was a global flood. And can you imagine the damage this caused this earth? Capture this: the damage caused by this global flood came at the command of *God*. Yes, people's sin is what prompted God to unleash the water, but God is the One who did the unleashing. As we know, the water will eventually subside and God will give the covenant promise of the rainbow to never again destroy this earth by flood waters. Quoting God in Genesis chapter 9, verses 13-15, **"I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. ¹⁴ It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, ¹⁵ and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh."**

God makes this promise: this earth will never be destroyed by water. Do you believe God? In our culture we are told that man made global warming is causing sea levels to rise and soon the water will wipe out entire populations. While it is accurate and true that people who live right at the ocean may indeed be overwhelmed by storms that cause death, the earth itself (the majority population) will not be devastated by flood. That is, if you believe God. And we do!

And the main point I want to make is this: the earth on which we live is not anywhere near as fragile as the most outspoken environmentalists make it sound. "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." Then, God put this earth through a global flood. That, precipitated the ice age. And yet through all of that God was faithful to sustain earth. Let me end by quoting Dr. E. Calvin Beisner,

"To speak of the whole biosphere, or even of extensive ecosystems, as extremely fragile is both to neglect the force of Genesis 1:31 and to ignore the testimony of geologic history, which includes the recovery of vast stretches of the Northern Hemisphere from long coverage by ice sheets several miles thick – which certainly wiped out more ecosystems more thoroughly than human action has come close to doing – not to mention the recovery, according to Genesis, of the whole earth from a flood that destroyed all air-breathing, land-dwelling life but the few representatives rescued in Noah's ark and the curse in Genesis 3 (*What About Environmentalism?* in *The New Answers Book 4*, 246)." Unquote.

Foundationally, we believe our environment was created by God and is sustained by God. Only He will destroy it – and we *will* see in the Bible exactly how He will, but it will not be by water and will be later that we read about this. So stick with us. We will continue to wrestle with the issues that matter most in our culture, giving a biblical response, next time on God Is!

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