

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"

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Vol. 32 No. 4

October 2019

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Environmental Disaster

—By Terry Carter



There has been a lot of focus on the environment lately, particularly global warming. One television network is encouraging people to confess their environmental sins like eating a steak once a week or using their air conditioning. High school students recently testified before congress about the anxiety they feel and the sleep they are losing over global warming.

The democratic presidential candidates took part in a couple of environmental forums that lasted hours and were televised nationally. Climate change protests were held across the country a few days ago.

Most of those protesting was under the age of 20. (No word yet on whether any of them were willing to give up their cell phones or to give up their air conditioning to reduce their carbon footprint.)

None of this is too surprising to me. I learned two things in second grade that I have found to be timeless truths.

First, there will always be some Chicken Littles around claiming that the sky is falling.

Second, there will always be Henny Pennies and Turkey Lurkies that are thrown into a panic by these claims.

The earth and I have already survived countless claims of the sky falling. I'm pretty sure we will survive countless more. I tried to make a list of them but lost track after a while. Here is a partial list:

Silent Spring was published three years before I was born.

The Population Bomb came out three years after my birth. I remember being told in the third grade that cars would be a thing of the past by the time we were adults because of the energy crisis.

When I was in junior high school, everybody was worried about "the coming ice age". By the time I got to high school, the fears had shifted to nuclear power and Three Mile Island. My freshman year of college, the nation was traumatized by the television movie *The Day After* and its depiction of the aftermath of a global nuclear war. As an adult, I've seen panic over war in the Middle East, El Nino, Y2K, La Nina, the Aztec calendar, etc. There is always a coming stock market crash according to some expert. "Better buy gold now," they advise.

Always a Chicken Little followed by Henny Penny and Turkey Lurkey. I'm just not easily scared by the prophets

of doom any longer. I've seen too much to panic.

There is another reason that I don't panic about global warming. This one is way more significant than the fictional story of Chicken Little. It is the Word of God.

After the flood of Noah, God promised to never again destroy every living thing as He did in the flood. Part of that promise is that as long as the earth remains, there will be winter and summer. **"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."** Gen. 8:22 (NKJV)

This promise was made to Noah, his descendants (every person living since then), and all living creatures.

"9 "And as for Me, behold, **I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 10 "and with every living creature that is with you:** the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth." Gen. 9:9-10 (NKJV)

I know that God is still honoring that covenant today for three reasons. **First**, there has never been another global flood. **Second**, the sign of the covenant is still with us today. In fact, I saw it in the sky just last week after a brief rain. Of course, I am talking about the rainbow. **Third**, God said He was making this covenant for perpetual generations. "12 And God said: **"This is the sign of the covenant** which I make between Me

and you, and every living creature that is with you, **for perpetual generations: 13 "I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 "It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall 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; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 "The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." 17 And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth." Gen. 9:12-17 (NKJV)**

This raises the question of why high school students would experience anxiety and lose sleep over fears of global warming. There is an obvious reason for this. What God said in the above Scriptures is not taught in school today. Instead, the religion of environmentalism is an intricate part of the entire curriculum. I say religion, because it requires faith, demands a change of behavior for the adherents, condemns the nonbelievers, and predicts the destruction of the earth and all of mankind. It even has its prophets and global commission to proselytize all of mankind.

Anxiety, as a result of a belief, is no proof of the validity of that belief. It only proves the sincerity of the believer. Furthermore, the government should not be in the business of acting upon feelings. Its actions ought to be based upon facts and demonstrable and practical solutions to problems indicated by those facts.

But there is more that needs to be said in this discussion. First, we need to recognize that God has given us dominion over all the earth. That does not mean that we are free to abuse our environment. It does mean that it was meant to serve us rather than for us to serve it. Still it only makes good sense to use our

resources wisely and take care of our world. God, Himself, tasked Adam with caring for and keeping (guarding) the garden. "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; **let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Gen. 1:26 (NKJV)**

"Then the LORD God took the man and **put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." Gen. 2:15 (NKJV)**

Second, we need to understand that man has done great damage to the environment on a global scale. However, the damage has not been caused by industry, chemicals, fossil fuels, etc. It has been caused by sin. Sin is, and always has been, the most environmentally destructive thing that man does or can do.

This is initially seen in the fall of man. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were cursed along with the serpent. However, so was the ground itself. Now it would bring forth thorns and thistles and would need to be worked with difficulty and sweat. Nature itself was altered as a result of sin. It is now less hospitable towards human life. "17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': **"Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." Gen. 3:17-19 (NKJV)**

It is further seen after Cain killed his brother Abel. Remember that Cain was a tiller of the ground. But after he murdered, God told him that the ground would no longer yield its strength to him. Thus, he would be a

vagabond and wonderer on the earth. This may not have affected the earth for all of mankind as Adam's sin did, but that mattered little to Cain. "When you till the ground, **it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." Gen. 4:12 (NKJV)**

The flood of Noah came as a result of the continual and pervasive wickedness of mankind. The flood killed every man and beast in which was the breath of life. But it also destroyed the earth itself. In fact, God cursed the ground again. "5 Then the **LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 13 And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 17 "And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die." Gen. 6:5,13,17 (NKJV)**

"5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and **the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water." II Pet. 3:5-6 (NKJV)**

"And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, **"I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done." Gen. 8:21 (NKJV)**

The world that was is no more because of sin. It is impossible to know just how profoundly different the world we live in today is from the world before the flood. The environment was changed globally, permanently and profoundly.

One indication of how much the world changed is the drastic change in the life span of humans. Prior to the

flood, a man's life was measured in hundreds of years. That changed radically after the flood. Within just a few generations after the flood, it was rare for a man to live anyway near as long as before.

Abraham's father lived to be 205. Abraham died at 175, which the Bible calls a "good old age". Sarah lived to be 127. Isaac was 180 and said to be "old and full of days".

The Patriarchs lived long for their time, but they were quite short lives compared to those before the flood. Mankind simply does not live as long after the flood as we did before it. Clearly something in the environment changed because of the flood. It is simply not as friendly to human life as it had been before.

In **Leviticus**, we see that sin defiles the land which may just vomit you out as a result. "24 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for **by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.** 25 '**For the land is defiled;** therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. 26 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 '(for **all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled**), 28 '**lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.**" Lev. 18:24-28 (NKJV)

Notice that the context here is sexual perversion. It includes incest, homosexuality, and bestiality. These things defile the land for any nation, not just Israel. In Numbers, we see that violence without capital punishment also defiles the land. "31 'Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32 'And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of

the priest. 33 'So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for **blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.** 34 'Therefore **do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell;** for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.'" Num. 35:31-34 (NKJV)

But there is good news in that the land can be healed. "13 "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin **and heal their land.**" II Chr. 7:13-14 (NKJV)

Sin has caused all of creation to groan and be in the bondage of corruption. "21 because the **creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption** into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that **the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.**" Rom. 8:21-22 (NKJV)

Finally, the world will once more be destroyed because of sin. This time it will not be a global flood, but fire, that God uses. "But **the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire,** being reserved **against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.**" II Pet. 3:7 (ASV)

Peter even warns that we should live Godly in light of the coming destruction of this world. This world is going to be destroyed, but we look for a new Heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. "10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which **the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.** 11 Therefore, **since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of**

persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which **the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?** 13 **Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**" II Pet. 3:10-13 (NKJV)

Yes, we should be concerned about the end of the world. Yes, it will be due to "global warming" to put it mildly. However, this global warming will not be caused by excess carbon emissions. It will be caused by sin and wickedness in excess. Refraining from beef, fossil fuels, plastic straws, and air conditioning will not stop it from coming.

What should we do about the destruction of the planet? Repent of sin and live a holy and Godly life. The world will still end. However, it will end when God chooses, not man. It will end because of sin and wickedness, not pollution. But repentance and righteous living will have you prepared to live eternally in the new Heaven and new earth where righteousness dwells.

That's where I plan to live eternally, not this earth. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34 (NKJV)