

Introduction: What do you think?

- The real issue with the environment is whether global warming is happening or not.
- “Tree huggers” and environmentalists are liberal, or new age, folks seeking to thwart economic progress and prosperity.
- The problem we are in today is a direct result of the “dominion” dogma, taught for centuries from Genesis chapter 1.
- The whole environmental debate is “overblown”. The Bible says it’s all going to burn up anyway.
- The earth is our “Sacred Mother,” the equal giver of life to all species, and as such all must be protected.
- The “going green” movement in business and government is just a “sham” to exercise undue control and increase profits.

The Question: How are followers of Christ to think, act, and respond to the controversial issue of the environment?

Examining the Scripture: What does God say about the environment?**1. The earth belongs to God.**

¹ *The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;*
² *for He founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.*

Psalm 24:1-2

Implication: We are to _____ God's creation.

Genesis 1:1

2. God appointed mankind “dominion” over the earth.

The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth He has given to mankind.

Psalm 115:16

Implication: We are the earth's _____ . Genesis 1:28, 2:15

3. The earth/nature has intrinsic value and reflects the character and beauty of the Creator.

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

Psalm 19:1-2

Implication: We must explore not _____ ; Romans 1:19-21
enjoy not _____ the earth.

4. Mankind is placed in the middle of the created hierarchy and is uniquely responsible to God (above) and for the animals, plants and resources (below).

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, ⁴ what is mankind that You are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them? ⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. ⁶ You made them rulers over the works of Your hands; You put everything under their feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, ⁸ the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

Psalm 8:3-8

Implication: We are to use not _____ animals, plants, and resources to glorify God.

5. God commands environmental stewardship to protect the land, animals, and vegetation for the common good.

Leviticus 25:1-12, 23
Deuteronomy 25:4; 20:19-20
Matthew 6:26

Implication: Consumption and productivity must be governed by the boundaries of _____.

6. Christ's redemptive work includes the earth.

¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

Romans 8:19-21

Implication: We must treat the earth with the same _____ God does. Revelation 21:1-4

Where do we go from here?

- Recognize and focus on the 7-8 verifiable issues we can all agree upon.
- Identify the 3 root causes of our poor environmental stewardship.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- Practical steps for you and your friends/family.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you characterize your awareness and involvement in environmental issues?
2. What new insight did you gain from God's Word on the environment?
3. How might you and your friends/family become a part of the solution?
4. How might you "build bridges" with those who are un-churched and passionate about the environment?