

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT IT?

Our Scripture tells the story of how human beings were charged at creation with *filling* the earth (check!), *subduing* it (check?), to *rule* over all living things (check...maybe?), and to *care for* and *maintain* it (uh...). Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 (New English Translation) lay out some of the first commands to human beings, and the extent to which we've kept these commands is debatable. What is much less debatable is that human civilization (particularly modern, Western society) has had an impact on creation, and certainly not always a positive one. And it's already becoming a problem.

DOMINATING THE EARTH: JESUS' STYLE Christians, Creation-Care, & Climate Change

a Brewed Theology
conversation starter

The “climate” surrounding this discussion is weird. Some people sound the alarm using fear tactics. Others deny conclusive science demonstrating a changing climate. Even the phrase “climate change” can be so polarizing that it's often avoided entirely. But we're giving you more credit than that. While we're not debating that climate change exists (*it does*), or that humans are contributing (*we are*), we *will* discuss how we're called to care for creation and the people that live in it now, and in the future.

A practical analogy is this: if 97% of engineers say the bridge you're on is going to collapse, hurt you, and the people below you, would you continue to use and drive on that bridge? Easy: no. And you probably wouldn't say, “Well, I just don't believe it.” A Christian comparison might be this: if our collective habits contradict a scriptural calling and threaten the most vulnerable of God's children, aren't people of faith obligated to engage the issue? Easy: yes. How? Well, that's not so simple. So we're going to talk about it.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What is your favorite part of God's creation? What's the weather like where you are? Have weather patterns changed in your lifetime? How does the climate affect the economy in your community? What (outdoor) hobbies do you have? What does it mean to have “dominion” over something? How are Christians supposed to care for creation? How do *you* care? What arguments have you heard *for* the existence of climate change? Against it? What questions do you have?

BIBLE BASICS

Spend some time with these. Read them, the surrounding verses, and consider creation care.

- **Genesis 1-2:** The Creation stories. What does God think of Creation? What are we supposed to do in it?
- **Psalms 104 (esp verses) 24-33:** God delights in creation (and the whales are God's “rubber duckies”).
- **Matthew 6:25-34:** “Don't worry,” Jesus says. (Easier said than done?) So, what about creation?
- **[BONUS] Matthew 25:32-46:** “Worry about these,” Jesus says about the hungry, thirsty, stranger, and more.
- **[BONUS] Philippians 2:1-13:** The “Christ Hymn,” read what the Apostle Paul says about how Jesus exercises power and authority (and “dominion”).

ESSENTIAL READINGS and LISTENINGS* (click the **headings** for links to knowledge)

THE BIBLE? AND CLIMATE CHANGE? WHAT?

Watch this YouTube video by Evangelical Christian and climatologist Katharine Hayhoe discuss relationships between Bible and biosphere. (They're not as unrelated as some may think)

A SOCIAL STATEMENT BY THE ELCA ON CREATION CARE

A social statement by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on creation care, released in 1993. It's long(ish), but skim "Part 1: Church's Vision of Creation," and "Part V: Commitments of this Church."

THE "LEAST OF THESE," THE MOST THREATENED

If you think you're relatively safe from shifting climates, you may be right (for now). But this is also a justice conversation because of how the world's poorest are hit the hardest. Read this article from Deutsche Welle (DW).

SKEPTICAL? SO WERE THESE PEOPLE

Six (brief) stories about skeptics who changed their minds, and why. By the New York Times. (Possible Paywall)

IT'S A [NATIONAL SECURITY] ISSUE

Rising seas, drought and famine refugees, fuel shortages, and infrastructure issues all potentially threaten national security, a side-effect of a shifting climate. Read this article by US News.

BONUS READINGS (for the overachievers...)

FOR THE LOVE OF SCIENCE (AND THE PLANET)

A pile of data, facts, and stuff from the National Space and Aeronautics Association (NASA). (If you're overwhelmed, but want to learn more, go check out Katharine Hayhoe's "Global Weirding" YouTube channel.)

YEAH BUT IT'S NOT GONNA AFFECT US...RIGHT?

Well, no. Climate change is going to affect us, and already is. Here's a 2017 CBS News article about economic impact in these here United States of America. And **another from ABC News in 2023**.

GET YOUR POLITICS OFF MY CLIMATE CHANGE

An article about separating politics and climate change. Long but solid look at the difficulties of the conversation.

HEAT IN THE HEARTLAND

An article by CNN Money about the changing climate's impact on corn farmers, and therefore everyone else.

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While not required, they are highly suggested.