



Thinking

**About
Climate Change**

By

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I recently watched news reports about millions of young people around the world skipping school on a Friday to march in what they called a climate crisis protest. Organizers, led by a high school student from Sweden, called it a 'global climate strike.' She spoke to a large crowd in New York City and said, "Change is coming whether they like it or not." Students carried signs that read:

- Climate Justice Now
- Human Change Not Climate Change
- Make The Earth Cool Again
- Go Green Before Green Goes
- Climate Revolution Stop Pollution
- Be Part Of The Solution Not Part Of The Pollution
- There Is No Planet B

That got me thinking since the Bible has a lot to say about climate and climate change. Who is to blame for climate change? You may be surprised.

History of Climate Change

First, let's take a look at the history of climate change, then we'll see what the future holds.

According to the Bible **climate** had its beginning when God created the heavens and the earth. From what we read in Genesis 1 and 2 the climate on earth was ideal for every creature that lived on the planet.

“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” Genesis 1:31

God engineered the earth as a perfect biosphere with the right amount of air, water, sunlight, soil, plants and trees. God created the first human being and planted a garden “eastward in Eden,” where He placed the man. God showed the man around the garden and told him that the fruit of every tree was there for his enjoyment except for one — the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told the man that if he ate from the fruit of that tree he would “surely die.”

God created woman and presented her to the man He had made. Sometime after that Satan, in the form of a deceiving snake, approached the woman and deceived her into eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She gave the fruit to her husband and he also ate it. Several things happened in that moment — one of them being the beginning of climate change.

God told the man that He cursed the ground “for your sake” and that he would return to the ground at the end of his life — “For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:17-19). God told the woman that He would greatly multiply her sorrow and conception and “In pain you shall bring forth children” (Genesis 3:16).

So, how did that impact climate change? The wickedness of man is what brought about the first climate crisis.

The first child born on Earth murdered the second child born on Earth, his brother. That led to a staggering growth of violence and wickedness among people on the planet. God saw “that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). God was going to destroy the entire human race along with every animal, bird and creeping thing He had made, but God showed grace and mercy to one man — Noah.

God chose to use a great flood of water to destroy every living thing on Earth, so He told Noah to build an ark that would be large enough to hold his family of eight human beings along with enough animals, birds and creeping things to begin replenishing the earth after the flood, and enough food and water to sustain them during the flood. God told Noah that He would cause it “to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made” (Genesis 7:4). That’s what God did. The flood killed all humans, cattle, beasts, birds and creeping things that were not in the ark.

“All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.” Genesis 7:22-24

God stopped the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven” “and the rain from heaven was restrained” (Genesis 8:2). The flood began to recede after 150 days. God caused the flood waters to recede “continually from the earth.” The time from when the flood began to when Noah and his family, along with the living creatures in the ark, left the ark was a little more than one year.

One of the interesting things to note is what God 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. ‘While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.’” Genesis 8:21-22

This is significant from a climate change historical perspective. Here are four important points in understanding how.

1. God created human beings in “Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). Humans are the only creature God made in His image and likeness.
2. God created human beings to “have dominion over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth ... have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:26-28)
3. There was no rain on earth in the early years following Creation — “but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground” (Genesis 2:5-6). That would give the earth an ideal climate.
4. God used rain (the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven) to flood the earth. It was after the flood waters receded from the earth that we read about seasons — cold and heat, winter and summer.

That’s climate change on a major, world-wide scale. Instead of the earth having the perfect amount of life-giving water coming from a continual mist from the ground that watered plants and trees, people were dependent on rain falling from clouds in the sky. That often led to not enough rain or too much rain. Too little rain brought droughts. Too much rain brought localized flooding along with crop destruction. Both led to famines and other natural disasters.

We see the first mention of famine in Genesis 12. Abram left his new home in Canaan for Egypt because “the famine was severe in the land” (Genesis 12:10). We read about famines throughout the Bible and in other ancient writings. Famine was a big problem on earth. Why?

I believe it's because the earth is tied to the character and behavior of human beings. God shared dominion of the earth and all the creatures in it with humans. What people did in the past impacted the earth in very real ways. The global flood that destroyed most living beings and brought about major climate change came about because of the wickedness and corruption of people. The Bible shows us that human beings are to blame for the original climate change.

“So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” Genesis 6:12

That brings us to what's next in the discussion about climate change.

Future of Climate Change

People love to talk about the future. What's going to happen next? When is this thing or that thing going to happen? The Lord's disciples were like that. They wanted to know when Jesus was going to show Himself as the conquering Messiah and bring about the "end of the age."

In answering His disciples' question, Jesus said this –

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.'" Matthew 24:15-22

Keep in mind that Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe. When He says there will be a **great tribulation** (*megalē thlipsis* – large in the widest sense of affliction, distress, persecution, pressure) "such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time," we should sit up and take notice. Something BIG is going to happen in the future, just

prior to Jesus Christ's return to earth, that will be devastating to the planet and everyone and everything in it.

The Apostle Paul wrote about this future event in his second letter to the Christians in Thessalonica. Paul wrote that Christ's return would not come until there was a falling away and the "man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Paul also wrote this as a reminder to the Thessalonians about what he had told them in the past –

"Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12

I've wondered for years about the 'lie' that would be told to people on earth that God would support by sending them 'strong delusion' to believe it. Some people believe it may be the sudden disappearance of millions of Christians in what is known as the 'rapture' and how a world leader might explain that disappearance. Others believe it could be a global movement of people who will make radical changes to their lives for what they believe is necessary to save life on the planet. It could be something else, but whatever that lie may be, God will send a delusion (*plané* – a wandering, departure) so people will believe the lie and open the way for events to unfold that will lead to the end of the age.

Climate Seals and Trumpets?

To learn more about what happens at the end of the age we turn to the Book of Revelation. The Apostle John wrote “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” as it was dictated to him by Jesus and His angels. Climate conditions on earth seem to hold an important part of the Revelation. We know from our study of the Old Testament Prophets that God used both natural and supernatural elements in fulfilling prophecy. He might send an angel or a human army to judge nations. God may do the same during the great tribulation.

Here are some examples of how the great tribulation will impact people and the planet:

- Second Seal – peace taken from the earth “that people should kill one another” (Revelation 6:4)
- Third Seal – scarcity of food on earth (Revelation 6:5-6)
- Fourth Seal – a quarter of the people on earth will be killed by sword, hunger and wild beasts (Revelation 6:7-8)
- Sixth Seal – a great earthquake will cause the sun to appear black and the moon like blood. It will impact the sky and move mountains and islands out of their places. People of all types (e.g. kings, rich men, commanders, slaves and free) will hide themselves in caves and rocks of the mountains because of the severity of the earthquake. (Revelation 6:12-17)
- Control of Winds – four angels standing at the four corners of the earth will hold the four winds of the earth so the wind will not blow

on the earth or sea. That's hard to grasp since so much depends on the continual movement of air around the world. That would certainly be a major climate crisis. (Revelation 7:1-3)

- Seventh Seal – an angel will throw fire from Heaven to the earth that will cause thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake. (Revelation 8:3-5)
- First Trumpet – the first angel will throw hail and fire, mingled with blood, to the earth and a third of the trees will be burned up. All green grass will also be burned up. (Revelation 8:7-8)
- Second Trumpet – the second angel will cast something like a great mountain burning with fire into the sea and a third of the sea will become blood. A third of the living creatures in the sea will die and a third of the ships will be destroyed.
- Third Trumpet – the third angel will sound and a great star will fall from heaven, burning like a torch, and fall on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. A third of the waters will become wormwood and many people will die from the water because of its bitterness. (Revelation 8:10-11)
- Fourth Trumpet – the fourth angel will sound and a third of the sun will be struck along with a third of the moon and a third of the stars so that a third of them will be darkened. “A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.” (Revelation 8:12)
- Fifth Trumpet – the fifth angel will sound and “a star fallen from heaven to the earth” will open a bottomless pit and release smoke into the air that will darken the sun and air. ‘Locusts’ will come upon the earth and kill and torment people who do have the seal of God on their foreheads for five months. These locusts will be “like

horses prepared for battle.” Their description could be of supernatural beings, but also might be human manufactured weapons of war. (Revelation 9:1-11)

- Sixth Trumpet – the sixth angel will sound and four other angels who had been found at the great river Euphrates were released to kill a third of mankind. A massive army of two-hundred million will be involved in the killing. The people who aren’t killed will not repent of their sins against God. (Revelation 9:13-21)
- Two Witnesses – two witnesses from God will have power to shut the sky so no rain falls during the days of their prophecy on earth (three-and-a-half years). They will also be able to turn waters to blood and strike the earth with plagues as often as they desire. (Revelation 11:1-6)
- Seventh Trumpet – the seventh angel will sound and there will be lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:15-19)
- Beasts From Sea and Earth – the beast from the sea will make war on earth with God’s people. The beast from the earth will perform great signs so that he will even make fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of people. He will cause everyone to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads. No one will be able to buy or sell unless they have the mark of the beast. (Revelation 13)
- First Bowl of God’s Wrath – the first angel will pour out his bowl upon the earth and a foul and loathsome sore will come upon people who have the mark of the beast and worship his image. (Revelation 16:2)

- Second Bowl of God's Wrath – the second angel will pour out his bowl upon the sea and it will become blood and kill every living creature in the sea. (Revelation 16:3)
- Third Bowl of God's Wrath – the third angel will pour out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water and they will become blood. (Revelation 16:4-7)
- Fourth Bowl of God's Wrath – the fourth angel will pour out his bowl on the sun and power will be given to him to scorch men with fire. (Revelation 16:8-9)
- Fifth Bowl of God's Wrath – the fifth angel will pour out his bowl on the throne of the beast and his kingdom will become fully of darkness. People in the beast's kingdom will experience great pain, but they will not repent of their wicked deeds. (Revelation 16:10-11)
- Sixth Bowl of God's Wrath – the sixth angel will pour out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and the water will dry up. That will prepare a way for kings from the east to gather together to “the battle in that great day of God Almighty.” (Revelation 16:12-14)
- Seventh Bowl of God's Wrath – the seventh angel will pour out his bowl into the air and there will be a great and mighty earthquake “as had not occurred since men were on the earth.” The ‘great city’ will divide into three parts and the cities of the nations will fall. Great hailstones will fall on people from heaven. (Revelation 16:17-21)
- Fall of Babylon – an angel announces the destruction of Babylon and the people of the world mourn the loss of the great city. (Revelation 18)
- Return of Jesus Christ – it is after these many judgments of God on the people of the earth that Jesus Christ will leave Heaven and

return to earth to judge and make war. The Lord will defeat the beast and the armies of the earth. (Revelation 19:11-21)

- Millennial Reign of Christ – Jesus will reign on the earth for a thousand years and bring peace to people and animals. (Revelation 20 and Old Testament prophecies)
- New Heaven and Earth – God will create a new heaven and new earth “for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no sea.” The New Jerusalem will come down out of Heaven to the new earth “as a bride adorned for her husband.” God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of people living in the new Creation. “... there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Revelation 21:1-4)

Climate Change Conclusion

People should be concerned about climate change, but for reasons that are different than what most are thinking. They look to human solutions for a spiritual problem and that will not work. We cannot effect that kind of change with science or technology or politics or governmental power. This is about God judging people for their wickedness and corruption. The enemy will lie to people on a massive scale to deceive and mislead them from the true problem and deep spiritual need in their lives.

“God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Addendum

I covered the climate change debate as a journalist for decades. I reported on the first Earth Day in 1970 where millions of Americans took to the streets to protest pollution, oil spills and other factors detrimental to the environment. I became a Christian a year later, which introduced me to other ways of looking at environmental issues.

I continue to care deeply about the environment in which we all live. I think we should be involved in ways that demonstrate our understanding and appreciation of the great gift God has given us. However, as addressed in this article, we must have a higher view of environmentalism. We must not allow secular humanism to replace the spiritual truth God has given us in His Word.

God created a perfect world and called humanity to multiply and fill the earth and take care of this precious gift. God placed the first man, Adam, into the Garden of Eden for the purpose of 'tending' and 'keeping' it (Genesis 2:15). That meant to 'work' and 'preserve' it. Adam failed in his duty to God and all of us who are his descendants. He allowed the enemy of God and humanity to deceive and destroy what God had created.

The effectiveness of humanity's protest about environmental pollution the past 50 years will continue to be a national and global debate. Scientists and political leaders may have varying ideas about the

problem and what they view as the best solutions, but nothing is going to stop what's coming.

I agree with the high school student from Sweden who told a crowd in New York City that "Change is coming whether they like it or not." Change is coming to this world whether people like it or not. God's plan for the end of the age is set and underway. My prayer is that we are all ready for what He is about to do.

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Revelation 22:20-21

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