

Biblical References to Creation Care

Collated by Jemima Parker

Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 God created the universe and everything in it and it was good. V26-28 People made to image God, as His image. People are to be God's authorized stewards, a royal priesthood with a vocation of representing God's rule on earth. *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"* Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

Genesis 2:2-3 The Sabbath, rather than people are the crown of creation. After each part of creation is declared "good", creation is taken as a whole and declared "very good". It was complete as a whole complex system, not just because people had finally been added.

Genesis 2: 4-25 People are a part of creation, we are created from the earth (v7). The beauty and bounty of the Garden of Eden. God gives people a role in creation *The Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it*". Genesis 2:15 (NRSV)

Genesis 9:1-17. God establishes a covenant with all life on earth, with particular reference to all living creatures, promising never to destroy it with some natural catastrophe. The sign of the covenant is a rainbow.

Exodus 14 The people of Israel took the risk of trusting God and followed Moses out of Egypt. The Egyptian economic system could not do without them and Pharaoh sends his army to retrieve them. Our economic system can entrap us and we can feel there is no escape from consumerism and its environmental destruction. God promises a different and better way.

Exodus 16 God provides enough food for His people through the daily gift of manna and quails. Anyone tempted to stockpile soon regretted it v18-20. This is a challenge to our consumer habits.

Leviticus 26:1-13. *"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit"*. Lev26:3-4 NIV. Keeping God's commands are directly linked to the health and productivity of the land. Today it is easier for us to understand this link; environmental disaster, either on a short term small scale like an oil spill, or a long term global scale as with the impact of fossil fuel usage, is often down to human carelessness, selfishness or worship of the idols of consumerism.

Deuteronomy 24:19-21 The principle of not gleaning too close to the edges, God commands the Israelites to leave a little in the fields for the poor and for

aliens. This principle of justice can apply in a modern business profit context, intensive farming and gardening all of which can damage ecosystems by taking everything rather than leaving a little for regeneration. *"When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands."* Deut 24:19

Deuteronomy 26:1-15 God calls the Israelites to offer the first fruits of the harvest to him as tithe, to be shared among the Levites and the aliens, and to celebrate together. This challenges our culture of personal wealth and possession acquisition.

Leviticus 25:1-12. God gives Moses instructions on how to let the land rest with both Sabbath fallow years, every seven years, and Jubilee fallows every fifty years. Good practice for maintaining the long term productivity of the soil for future generations. Establishes the principle of being stewards who do not exhaust the resources God has given us.

Leviticus 25:23-24 The land belongs to the Lord. Provision for the land to be redeemed. *"The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land."* Leviticus 25:23-24 (NIV)

Joshua 24:21-27 A stone (verse 27) is a witness to the commitment/covenant that the people make to the Lord. This is the last of seven memorials that are set up in the land to remind the Israelites of what the Lord has done for them. The natural world bears witness to our relationship with God.

Nehemiah 9:6 Ezra starts his exaltation of the Lord with a declaration of His authority as Creator. *You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.* (NIV)

Job 12:7-10 All the elements of creation point to the Lord's wisdom and strength. *"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."* Job 12:7-10 (NIV)

Job 37:14-18 God created all things. Consider His wondrous works. *"Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God's wonders. Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash? Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who is perfect in knowledge? You who swelter in your clothes when the land lies hushed under the south wind, can you join him in spreading out the skies, hard as a mirror of cast bronze?"* (NIV)

Job 38 and 39 Particularly 38:4-7. A powerful description of God's might and majesty in creating all things and His evident delight in all that He has made. God shows Job that he is part of a much bigger picture. Calling upon him to stop being so anthropocentric.

Psalm 8. David praises his creator God, with particular awe of the starry sky and God's condensation to be mindful of puny man and to ordain him ruler over God's creatures.

Psalm 19:1-5. God's glory is proclaimed in creation

Psalm 24:1-2. This psalm proclaims the Lord as Creator, Sustainer and Possessor of the whole world and so worthy of our praise.

Psalm 36:6 The psalmist declares the character of the Lord, Yahweh, his steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness and justice. Then states "*you save humans and animals alike*", pointing to his salvation for the whole of creation, not just humans.

Psalm 47 A statement of faith declaring that Yahweh is the Lord of all, including all the earth v2 and 7.

Psalm 65 The psalmist describes the relationship that God has with the earth. How He gently tends it v9-10, how He is its hope and salvation v5 and how the earth sings for joy v12-13 and is filled with awe at the Lord's wonders. "*You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas,*" Psalm 65:5 NIV.

Psalm 95. A call to worship the Lord, praise to Him as the Lord of all the Earth. The Lord's Kingship over His people is acknowledged.

Psalm 96. A call to praise the Lord. V11-13 All God's creation will rejoice when His kingdom of righteousness comes. Cf Romans 8:21-22 waiting for His kingdom. Psalm 96:10-13 - *Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.* (NIV)

Psalm 100. All call for the earth and people to worship the Lord joyfully as creator and be thankful for His goodness and faithfulness.

Psalm 104. A descriptive psalm of praise declaring God as the Maker and Sustainer of creation. It describes His delight in diversity.

Psalm 121: 1-2 As creator of the whole of the cosmos we can confidently

seek help from the Lord.

Psalm 148. This psalm declares the Lord as the creator and exalts all of creation (including people) to praise Him.

Proverbs 8: 22-31 Creation account. Here Jesus can be seen to be personified as Wisdom and His part in creation is beautifully described. (cf I Cor 1:24, 30 and Col 2:3)

Proverbs 13:23 *"The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice."* NRSV. The impact of climate change is disabling the ability of many who are solely dependent on their land for food to feed themselves.

Proverbs 31:8-9 *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."* NIV God calls us to bring justice for the poor and for those who cannot speak for themselves. Climate change is having the greatest effect on the global poor. Its further impact will be on our future generations who are unable to seek justice now.

Isaiah 6:3 *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."*

Isaiah 11:1-9 A description of the Messiah's restoration of the whole of creation. *"They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."* Isaiah 11:9

Isaiah 24-27 This passage speaks the desolation that is due the earth. *"The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word."* 24:3. God's covenant relationship between himself and creation (Genesis 9:1-17) holds off this destruction. The earth is committed to mortality unless it is liberated from this bondage as described in Romans 8:18-23. *"The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left."* Isaiah 24:4-6 (NIV)

Isaiah 43 God speaks with tenderness of His redemption, protection and love for His people v 1-7, then of His authority and unique deity v 8-17. From v18-21 He speaks of the new thing that he is bringing about, restoration for creation and His people.

Jeremiah 2:7 The Israelites were saved from slavery in Egypt and brought back to the fertile land of Israel by God. Their rebellion against God is exemplified in their use of the land. This parallels our contemporary story of

our salvation through Jesus, but abuse of the earth. *"I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable."* (NIV)

Ezekiel 34:2-4. The Lord rebukes his people for their self-centeredness and calls upon them to provide for the weak. *"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally."* Ezekiel 34:2-4 (NIV)

Hosea 4:1-18 The link between the lack of faithfulness of the people and the fruitfulness of the land is spelt out. *"Because of this the land dries up, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea are swept away."* NIV

Micah 6:1-8. A call for true living worship, not show worship. *"He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

Matthew 6:25-33 Jesus commands us not to worry about material things but to seek first his Kingdom. To illustrate how we do not need to be wrapped up with consumerism, in all its forms, He gives examples from His creation; the birds, the lilies and the grass, all of whom He abundantly provides and cares for.

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" Matt 6:26 (NIV)

Matthew 16:24-26 Jesus's call to full commitment to follow Him denying the distractions of worldly consumption. *"For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"* Matt 16:25-26

Matthew 21:18-22 and Mark 11:12-25 Jesus shows his miraculous power over nature in withering a fig tree. He uses it to illustrate that we can confidently ask for all things in prayer.

Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus gives us clear teaching that everyone is God's. Our actions at home and in our own lives affect our global and generational neighbours through climate change; they are all treasured by God.

Mark 6: 7-13 Jesus sends the disciples out "travelling light" to spread the good news. What might this have to teach us in our lifestyles and for the environment?

Mark 12:28-31 Jesus calls us to love our neighbours. How can we say we are doing this if we are destroying the earth on which both our local and global neighbours depend? *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'* There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31 NIV

Mark 16:15 The great commission. *"And He said to them, 'Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation.'"* NRSV

Luke 10:25-37 The Parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus calls us to love our neighbours. How can we say we are doing this if we are destroying the earth on which our local, global and generational neighbours depend? *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* Luke 10:27. In the parable, who is our modern day neighbour? Who is the robber and how can we be good Samaritans?

Luke 12:13-21 The parable of the Rich Fool. Jesus gives a warning against greed, consumerism and striving for unlimited economic growth. All futile and distractions from our relationship with God. *"Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'"* Luke 12:15 NIV

Luke 12:22-34 Do not Worry. Jesus speaks about seeking his kingdom rather than worrying and striving after material gain. He uses his care for creation as an example to us.

Luke 12:41-48 Jesus expects us to be good managers of all He has entrusted us with. In our rich culture this is quite a responsibility, as we have been entrusted with all the resources of nature. *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."* Luke 12:48 (NIV)

Luke 12:49-53 The way of Jesus is divisive. If we live out our faith with simple living and low carbon lifestyles, this will be offensive to others, as it criticizes their choices.

Luke 12:54-59 Jesus calls us to interpret the signs of our times and take sensible action. He illustrates this by the obvious action of trying to settle with your accuser out of court before it comes to a prison sentence. For us the signs are clear, the science of climatic change gives all the evidence. Now we need to take action to avoid a long term sentence of severe climate change impacts.

Luke 15:11-31 The Prodigal Son. God gives us freely of the riches of His creation/our inheritance v12, and like the younger son we squander them v13. Are we ready to make the hard journey of acceptance, repentance and humility to come back to the Father? Can we join with him in celebrating creation as a

gift rather than a birthright?

John 1:1-3 The Word (Christ) was with God at the beginning and all things were created through Him. *"Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."* (NIV)

John 3:16-17 Jesus describes the extent of God's love for the world. That He comes not in condemnation but for the salvation of the world and all those who believe in him.

John 6:1-15. The feeding of the five thousand is an amazing miracle of nature and demonstrates Jesus' power over the natural properties of all God's creation, including food. Verse 12 reveals Jesus' attitude to wastefulness, even when there has been so much food the left overs should not be wasted. I wonder who ate the food in the 12 baskets for their supper! *"When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."* John 6:12 (NIV)

Acts 2: 42-47 The early church did not value individual materialism, but shared their possessions and focuses on praising God and serving others.

Romans 1:18-24 Paul argues that God's eternal power and divine nature have always been evident in His creation, for people to see and respond to. *"Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."* Romans 1:19-20 (NIV)

Romans 8:18-23 Paul speaks of creation's state of bondage and how it waits to be set free through Christ's redemption. *"For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 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 (NIV)

Romans 13:10 *"Love does no harm to its neighbour."*

Ephesians 1:3-10 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... with all wisdom and insight he has made known the mystery of his will ... to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Philippians 4:9-13 Paul describes how he has learned to be content in all circumstances. "For I have learned to be content with whatever I have." V11. We are called to live lives content with what we have, not driven to own more and more. Our greed affects both us, our planet and our neighbours.

Colossians 1:15-23 All things are created by and for Christ. The gospel of

reconciliation through Jesus is for all things in creation (v23).

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:16-17(NIV)

1 Timothy 6:3-10 Paul commends being satisfied with our basic needs and outlines the problems that money and riches can cause. *"But godliness and contentment is of great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."* 1 Timothy 6:6-7 (NIV)

Hebrews 1:1-3 Christ is the creator and sustainer of all created things. His supremacy is established here.

James 5:5-6 (1-6) Prophetic words about the judgment of the rich in the face of their self-indulgence at the expense of innocent people and the earth.

1 John 4:7-21 John describes God as love. He sent Jesus as the saviour of the world v14. With His perfect love we do not need to be fearful of anything v18 (including the horrors of climate change) we can act with hope in His love v19. We are commanded to act in love towards our brothers and sisters, which would include caring for the creation on which they depend.

Revelation 4:11 The lord God is praised because he is the creator. *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."*

Revelation 11:15-19 A picture of the world becoming God's Kingdom and His judgment being brought to bear on those who have destroyed the earth. *"The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great — and for destroying those who destroy the earth."* Revelation 11:18 (NIV)

Revelation 21:1-5 John's vision that gives us a picture of the restoration of heaven and earth. God comes to dwell with us in His renewed creation.