

Global Warming: How Should Christians Respond?¹

¹ <https://answersingenesis.org/environmental-science/climate-change/global-warming-in-perspective/>

Christians are reacting in very different ways to the issue of global warming - from finding practical ways to reduce their “carbon footprint” to lobbying the government for action, or ignoring the issue altogether. So what is a biblical approach?

Understanding Human “Dominion”

When God gave Adam dominion over the earth, he was told to take care of the garden. In verse after verse of Scripture, we learn that God made us stewards of His earth, caretakers of the natural resources that He has provided on this planet. “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness” (Psalm 24:1).

But does this mean that we are to protect nature at any cost?

God did not create human beings merely to serve or “preserve” the earth. Rather, He made us in His image, as His highest creation, and He gave us the privilege and duty to glorify Him in everything we do, including managing the earth to make it more beautiful and productive. Just as God “planted a garden,” we want to be good gardeners, too.

The earth was made as our dwelling place, and while it is our responsibility to maintain it, we must not place higher importance on the environment than on the people who inhabit it. The Industrial Revolution, so often vilified by global warming activists, has improved the quality of life for millions, even billions, of people. It has also “saved” the lives of untold millions.

Weighing Our Actions

Whatever action we take, whether as individuals or through government action, we must carefully weigh the consequences. While many people support laws to reduce CO₂ emissions, believing that this will appreciably slow the progress of global warming, we must consider whether the science supports this claim. We must also beware of unintended consequences, such as the loss of personal liberties.

Whatever a person’s view of the government’s role, it is undeniable that laws to limit CO₂ output would have far-reaching effects on the poor. The increased costs of producing food, powering vehicles, and heating and cooling homes are only a few of the potential negative results. Lower-income families, especially in less-developed countries, would be hit especially hard.

E. Calvin Beisner, a respected environmental expert, examines the economic side-effects of anti-CO₂ policies and concludes: “The policies that are being promoted to fight global warming not only will not make a difference... but also will have a great harmful impact on the world’s poor.”

According to Beisner, even the vast changes proposed by global warming activists would have only a negligible effect on CO₂ levels in the atmosphere, with little possibility of reversing or even slowing global warming. But if the proposed changes become reality, the potential costs in lives and freedoms would be incalculable.

But should we do nothing to fight global warming? There are practical things individuals can do to maintain our planet and keep it beautiful and safe for the next generation, such as reducing waste, recycling, and driving fuel-efficient vehicles. The choice to take any of these - or stronger - measures should always be based on a clear understanding of the facts and the eternal principles in God's Word.

God's Word tells us about a "new heaven and a new earth" that He is planning for His people, free of sin and the Curse. Our current environmental problems are serious and worth further thought and action, but the Bible puts all such issues into proper perspective. While we need to behave wisely in the fleeting moments we have on this earth, a much greater change is coming, one that should modify our behaviour - the "global warming" described in 2 Peter 3:10. "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."