

Views on the environment in the bible



Rough Draft

Deforestation is one of the worst cases of environmental pollution on Earth. In the Bible, it does not say a lot about how we should take care of the environment which results in the Earth experiencing bad environmental changes. There are little to no information regarding the environment in the Bible. This has resulted in the widespread issue of pollution and deforestation throughout the Christian world.

Pollution is the act of befouling especially by environmental contamination with man-made waste. Deforestations is a type of global pollution. Deforestation is the action or process of removing trees. Mainly, deforestation happens in the rainforest. Rainforests can be located in South America (Amazon which is located in Brazil), Central Africa and all throughout Southeast Asia. Half of the Earth's tropical forests have been cleared. In the book " Deforestation of Tropical Rain Forests" by Torsten Alemung and Markus Diehl, they begin to explain the effects deforestation has had since the early 1980's. The text says, " Since the beginning of the eighties the increasing deforestation of tropical forests have raised major concerns both in the respective tropical countries and in the industrialized nations. The reason is that the destruction of the tropical forest ecosystem does not only impact on the economic and ecological well-being of tropical countries but incurs changes in the microclimate" (Amelung 1). People from industrialized nations and respective tropical countries both understand what is happening to the environment around them but those people are not attempting to cease this problem.

Here are some effects of deforestation. One of the main effects of deforestation is animal extinction. The definition of extinction is when a group of individuals or animals begin to disappear, primarily because of the environment. Many animal species are losing their natural habitats primarily because of deforestation. Around 70% of the world's plants and animals live in forest. If deforestation keeps continuing at this rate, this can carelessly lead to species extinctions.

Another effect of deforestation is soil erosion. Soil erosion happens when you swipe away the topsoil which contains a lot of rich nutrients and organic material. Tree roots are attached to the soil. Without the trees, the soil is separate from the tree so it can be blown away from the wind. This can lead to vegetation issues. Crops like soy, coffee and palm oil are huge resources that are utilized globally (Williams 404).

The water cycle is another effect of deforestation. The water cycle is how the Earth's water circulates. To explain the water cycle, water on lands or groundwater is evaporated into the air. The water then condenses in the core of the cloud called condensation. Condensation is when gas turns into liquid form. After the water reaches condensation, this starts the third step called precipitation. Precipitation is when all the water that has gone through the process of evaporation and condensation will fall back to the ground and the water cycle starts all over again.

To counter this argument, deforestation may have some good effects on nature and the physical environment. A good effect of deforestation is cattle ranching. Cattle ranching is the practice of raising livestock and other

animals on massive divisions of land. In Brazil, cattle ranching is the main farming system in the Amazon.

But cattle ranching is the biggest cause of deforestation in the Amazon. Nearly 80% of deforested areas are used for cattle ranching. Another good effect for deforestation are utilities. The wood that we use everyday helps keep carbon out of the atmosphere which affects climate change. As trees grow, they begin to store carbon dioxide. As wood is a good material to build, soy is another useful material that can be used to the full ability as wood. Soy can also replace dangerous solvents which can harm human and many other types of wildlife.

The history of migration and settlement influenced the start of deforestation. In the book "World Ecological Degradation" by Sinc C Chew, He explains that Greece resulted from the clearing of fields for agriculture, obtaining wood for fuel and manufacturing needs and producing timber for construction and that trading patterns and colonial settlements were entrenched in the main regions in the world (Chew 132). Chew also begins to explain about Rome and how they adapted after they removed a portion of the forest. Forests were removed to give away any urbanized needs. As Rome's population grew, houses began to replace the hillside of Rome (Chew 92). The analysis on these two pieces of evidence is that deforestation has played a huge role in early civilization. This also comes to think that deforestation started out as a helpful way to start a community or civilization but once people are settled wherever they please, it becomes a problem because eventually people begin to overuse or misuse the forest for necessities and other uses. As I

listed the ethical problems about deforestation, there are some guidelines in the Bible that explain how and why we should take care of the environment.

In the book "Care of Creation" by Joseph Coleson, he shares God's intentions on how us humans should take care of the Earth. The text says "The spectrum ranges from those who argue strongly for greater Christian involvement to those content to evangelize and leave the fate of the earth in God's hands." (Coleson 61). He also says that from a biblical perspective, we understand that we have a command to care for the environment and that we have ourselves to blame for the current situation we are currently in and that, eventually, God will restore all. (Coleson 61-62). We should not take the Earth for granted. We should take care of the Earth the best of our ability. He then goes on to say "God has delegated the great dignity of being human to us. With that dignity comes responsibility, a dignity and responsibility that God in his gracious love refuses to withdraw. To absolve us of responsibility for our neighbor's spiritual and physical well-being would be to abort the creation project, to abort the human project." (Coleson 66). This means that taking care of the earth is one of our responsibilities that God has chosen to give us humans. This correlates to when God gave Adam the position to name the animals. "Now the LORD God formed out of the ground all of the wild animals and all of the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave name to all of the livestock, the birds in the sky and all of the animals. But for Adam, no suitable helper was found." (Genesis 19-20). The Bible says nothing about endangered species but Coleson also says "It would be a mistake, however,

to conclude from this that preserving species from extinction is no part of God's plan and desire for humans in our appointed work of creation care." (Coleson 171). Even though as Coleson stated that endangered species are not mentioned in the Bible, we should not leave out the animals in danger of extinction because most humans can become good stewards.

My second argument is that deforestation has been happening for a long period of time. In a book called " Design For a Livable Planet" by Jon Naar, he states " Covering a third of the Earth's surface, forests and woodlands play a vital ecological role. They control climate by influencing wind, rainfall, humidity, and temperature. They recycle water, oxygen and carbon, which reduces soil erosion, flooding and air pollution. Providing habitats for half of the world's animal and plant species, they are a rich source for food, fuel and medicines" (Naar 113). Forests alone plays an important part of our everyday lives and to hear that only half of our rainforest have been departed is crucial for the physical environment. Climate change will affect the globe if this keeps happening. In a book called An Introduction to Tropical Rain Forests by T. C. Whitmore, it talks about how fast deforestation was increasing. The text says " It is estimated that in the 1990's, The total remaining area of all tropical force was 1756 square miles with 52, 18 and 30 percent in America, Asia and Africa, respectively." (Whitmore 207). I assume deforestation was happening because all three continents had a lot of good economic booming companies which then make them forget to care for the environment. Since deforestation has happened for a long time, we will take a look at when it first started to take off. Michael Williams, author of " Deforesting the Earth: From Prehistory to Global Crisis", he states " From the

beginning, hominid diet was a mixture of plant and animal sources and resembles that of the other primates. Certain plants were favored around camps, A natural vegetation was disturbed, enriched, and selected, which encourage the co-evolution of species” (Williams 37). I believe because of the transition to deforestation to agriculture created a series of different variations of species of the hominid. Author Sing Chew has also said “ Urbanization, population increases, manufacturing, and trade during Roman times had severe consequences for the ecological landscape. The drastic degradation of the environment and the pollution that followed were not only restricted to areas within the Roman empire but extended to external areas. Thus, an ecologically degradative shadow was cast over a broad domain that covered Europe, the Mediterranean, and Asia Minor, including distant lands where Roman trade flowed. In other words, the Roman degradative footprint on the ecological landscape was expansive and intensive. (Chew 86) He is just explaining what the ecological degradation was in Rome and the effects that it had against everyone else in that region.

Lastly, the Bible says a lot about how we should take care of the environment. Starting out with Genesis 1: 26-28 it says “ Then God said, “ Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “ Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that

moves on the earth." God put man above all things that he has created through those seven days and specifically tells him to ' be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it' meaning that man should take care of the Earth at their will.

Another quote from the Bible is Deuteronomy 11: 10-15. The verse says that the land that they were just in " For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden. " But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year. It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. " He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

This verse talks about how God promises the Israelites who were in Egypt that there will be a promised land for God's people and that on the journey to the promised land, the LORD will always be on their side no matter what circumstances happen.

Lastly, the verse from Genesis 9: 1-3 says " And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, " Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. " The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every

bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. “ Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. When God told Noah and his family to build an ark to fulfill the covenant, he saved the animals and saved the lives of humanity

There may be credible information in the Bible about taking good care of the environment but as a nation, we need to step in and stop environmental pollution.

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