

- *“The world is dyeing, and it’s your fault.”*
- *“The climate is changing, and our politicians are too gutless to fix it.” Shame on them.*
- *“Our world is getting poisoned, and big business is to blame.”*
- *“The forests are disappearing, and those greedy farmers – they’re the problem...”*

That’s what I hear, just about every day, when I turn on the TV, or read a news-paper.

And of course, that’s a rather popularist view, and if we were to visit some environmentalist blog-sites, we’d find some very much more extreme views....

It doesn’t take a genius to work out that the world we live in, **isn’t** the safe, harmonious, beautiful, paradise we would all like it to be...

- Wars
- Jihad
- Terrorism
- People who would blow themselves up, amongst groups of families, just hoping that they might kill or maim some mums, dads & kids...
- Genocide
- Murder
- Road carnage
- Rape
- Paedophilia

And that’s just what people do to people...

Our world is not a safe place. Here’s the top 10 natural disasters:

Rank	Death Toll	Event	Location
1	1,000,000–4,000,000	1931 China floods	China
2	900,000–2,000,000	1887 Yellow River flood	China
3	830,000	1556 Shaanxi earthquake	China
4	450,000 (242,000–655,000)	1976 Tangshan earthquake	China
5	375,000 (250,000–500,000)	1970 Bhola cyclone	East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)
6	300,000	1839 India cyclone	India
7	300,000	1737 Calcutta cyclone	India
Remember? 8	280,000	2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami	Indian Ocean
9	273,400	1920 Haiyuan earthquake	China
10	250,000–300,000	526 Antioch earthquake	Byzantine Empire (now Turkey)

ⁱ Natural disasters abound... And their destruction can be enormous.

And when I was preparing for this message, I discovered there is another type of natural disaster that I've never even heard of before (Limnic Eruption). Or sometimes it's called a "lake overturn". It happens when carbon dioxide, which is dissolved in deep lake water, suddenly erupts in a giant bubble. And it can be devastating. Sometimes it causes a localised tsunami, but usually the death-toll is more because of the bubble of carbon dioxide that it releases. It suffocates wildlife, livestock and humans. In 1986, it happened in Cameroon, suffocating 1700 people and 3500 livestock...

So there you go – there's another thing to worry about – being gassed in our sleep because a near-by lake turns into a giant soft-drink that burps....

But even in what we consider "the natural world – the animal Kingdom", there's danger. Have a listen to this – it's a song by the (*Scared weird little guys – Come to Australia*)

Nature is not always a wonderful, safe, beautiful thing... in fact it can be downright dangerous...

And in Australia, it's getting even more dangerous, because we're not allowed to kill snakes; we're not allowed to shoot crocodiles; they've all-but put an end to catching sharks.... Our nation have become convinced that "natural is better"...

But that's not always the case. "Natural" does not necessarily mean "good"... When it comes to tucker, or even medicines, some people go for the "all-natural" approach, and they vow and declare "It's natural. Therefore it's good for us"... And I

sometimes respond with something that bursts their bubble a bit, “Ah, like Arsenic and Strychnine – they’re natural – So they must be good for us too, I suppose?”

The world (even in its natural state) is not a safe, harmonious paradise.... *If you’ve ever seen a crow picking the eyes out of a healthy sheep*, so that they can then start eating that sheep alive... you’ll know, that the world is **not** beautifully good...

In news and current affairs programs these days, one of the worst things that someone can be accused of, is guess what???? Being: “A climate change denier”.... The way they go on, you’d think “a climate change denier” is something akin to being a war criminal or something.

They **used** to be called “A climate change sceptic”... But now they get branded as a “climate change denier”, because apparently the science is in... And the climate is changing – Well, yes, we’ve known that for years – the climate is always changing... But now, apparently, the scientists have confirmed it – “climate change is in **your** hands”, and you (a mere human) have the power to change the climate of a planet...

And every time there’s a flood; or a drought; or a cyclone; or a vicious storm; or whenever a local temperature record is broken (either hotter or colder), we’re going to hear about it because the world is so connected with media these days (what **used** to go un-noticed, is noticed very quickly), and: “CLIMATE CHANGE !!!! LOOK !!! THERE’S THE PROOF !!!!... We need to take action on this, and we need to take action on it now – before it’s too late...”

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You know what???

There **is** something wrong with our world... It **is** decayed and broken... And humans **are** responsible, but it didn't begin with the industrial revolution as our (so-called) scientists would have us believe...

The world, and its condition, are in God's hands. If the world is in a state of brokenness, our God who holds the world in His hands, has done it... And He did it with a purpose...

And if our world needs fixing, it's not in the domain of us humans to be able to fix it – the work of global and universal renewal, is in **God's** domain – not ours... What kind of human arrogance, could possibly suggest that **we** could fix the world???

When God created the world, He looked at everything that He had created, and He said, “It is very good”... But the problem is, creation didn't **stay** good, did it?

When Adam and Eve sinned against God, and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, all creation was cursed. They were driven out of the garden of Eden – that paradise that God had created. And it would be paradise no longer.

And from that time on, woman was cursed with pain in child-birth, and women and men would not be equal (that's a consequence of the fall).... And man would be cursed with toiling for his food, because from then on, the earth would be cursed.

And you lot (living in a farming community), know all about this... 1 year's seeds – 7 years weeding... We control weeds and disease and insects... Cattle folk have trouble with Pimelea, and we're thankful we don't live in tick country... You have to keep controlling regrowth, and we're thankful that (for now), we can continue to do that in Queensland.

We have to vaccinate our stock against diseases... It is by our toil, that we work, against the curse of the Earth. *Even my vege garden is cursed. I'm reminded of this curse every time I have to weed it, every time my tomatoes get fruit fly, every time powdery mildew gets into my beans, and every time those dastardly little sparrows eat my seedlings. – I'm reminded of the curse of the fall.*

Mankind sinned, and the Earth was cursed. And ever since then, the earth has been groaning...

- We can hear the earth groaning, every time there's an earth quake; or a flood; or a famine; or a cyclone...
- Every time there's a cancer; or a flu; or a cold; or an Ebola virus, this is the world groaning...
- We hear the world groan, in the cries of the hungry;
- We see it in the gaunt face of the aids orphan;
- And we see it in the recoil of a child soldier's Kalashnikov...

Our world groans, because we sinned, and God cursed us and the world (because of our sin)...

But the good news is, our world is cursed with a purpose. Everything God does, is for good. Our God is a good God, and He has a good plan that He is bringing to fruition: V20

says: ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, **in hope** ²¹ that the creation **itself** will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the **freedom** of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation **has been groaning** together in the pains of childbirth until now.

God, subjected creation, to this futility – to this ongoing cycle of:

- good times, only to be demolished in disaster
- life, only to be cut down by sickness or disease
- peace, only to be overtaken by war
- the cycles of good seasons & droughts & floods
- ice ages and a world-wide flooding event...
- cities are built, earth quakes destroy them – they are built again

This ongoing cycle of futility...

God has subjected creation to that which makes it groan, for a purpose. What purpose is that?

in hope ²¹ that the creation **itself will be set free** from **its** bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

John 3:¹⁶ "... **God so loved the world**, (not just people – the world – the Kosmos) **that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**

God's plan, was to redeem – not just humans – but creation itself, and He did it through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week, we heard a couple of stories of Christians who have been suffering for their faith. And we talked about why Christians suffer, rather than deny Jesus. And the answer is, when we suffer **for** Christ, we suffer **with** Christ... And we suffer with Christ, because we will be **glorified** with Christ...

But guess what??? It's not only Christians who will be glorified...

creation **itself** will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Up on the screen, is the typical cartoon picture of heaven... And this is how a lot of people picture, "glory" – how they will be (in their final state)... Now, if you have that kind of picture of "glory" in your head, I want you to erase it immediately... I don't know where we've ever come up with this sort of image of glory...

I suspect it's probably a form of "escapism" – there is so much trouble, and so much hardship in this physical world, we feel we have to escape from it... And so we seem to have developed this desire to escape to bouncy clouds in heaven.

When the Jehovah Witnesses come knocking on our doors, they get their greatest success, by preying on a general lack of

biblical knowledge, in church-goers. If you are a church-goer, they will generally put 2 points forward, to try and convince you that your church has been teaching you a lie, and that what they teach, is the truth...

*The first point they will use, is The Trinity. And they'll say "Do you know, that the word "Trinity" isn't even in the Bible... And a lot of 'church-goers', will fall into their trap and say "Oh, yes it has to be – my church teach me about the Trinity all the time." ... But it's true – the **word** "trinity" is **not** in the Bible... It is a word that we use, to try and describe how God describes Himself in the Bible... In the Bible, we very clearly encounter "God the Father". And yet "The Father and the Son are One". Jesus Christ is also God... And the Holy Spirit, is a person. The Jehovah Witnesses just want to think of the Holy Spirit as a "force", but He's not – He's a person – the Holy Spirit is God Himself, who lives in us... So the **word** "trinity" isn't in the Bible, and yet the 3 persons of God – and yet **one** God, is in the Bible... And so we use the word "trinity" to describe that.*

And if you ever have a JW tell you the word "trinity" isn't in the Bible, agree with them. Say "I know it's not. But the 3 persons of the one God are". And then you can set them straight, and say, "Did you know that the word "Jehovah" is not in the New Testament??? In the original Greek, the New Testament never uses the name "Jehovah" or "Yhwh". It's not there. And it's not in any modern translations, except for your man-made version...

So that's one point they use to try and deceive us. A second point of ignorance they prey on, is they'll ask you about heaven and paradise, and when Jesus returns, will we be with Jesus in Heaven, or on earth???? And a lot of church-goers,

are under the impression that we'll be bouncing around in the clouds of heaven... but we're not...

The Bible very clearly teaches that God is going to restore the heavens and the Earth – actually more than restore:

Let me read to you: Revelation 21:1–4 (ESV)

The New Heaven and the New Earth

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

When Jesus returns, He's not taking us to heaven to be with Him... The old heavens and the old earth are passing away... Creation itself, is going to be renewed and glorified... And God Himself, will live with us, on this new, glorified earth...

So please, don't get caught out by the JW's. I hope you know your Bible well enough, to know that we will live in God's glory, in His glorious, new, redeemed Earth. All the broken-

ness and pain and destruction of the Earth, will be undone, and the Earth will be reconciled to God. A new heaven and a new earth.

As I wrote this message, I couldn't help but think about "The Greens"... They have become quite a powerful, and influential political force in our land. And their ideology, is **supposedly** based around environmental issues, and making this world a better place – to restore the health, of a broken, groaning world.

And in the light of today's reading, I can confidently say, that in their approach, and in their policies that they 'hold dear', they have utterly failed.

If they're attempting to save the earth, they do it in exactly the **wrong** way... They have made creation their God, or more precisely, they've made themselves their God, and view creation as their domain (their kingdom), and they've totally rejected God in the process. They sin against God, by rejecting Him; by rejecting His laws and commandments; by rejecting His Lordship; by rejecting His Son; and by rejecting God's children...

In our political landscape today, there is no greater anti-Christian, anti-God force, than the Greens. Almost every policy they have, is against God; against His Laws; and against His children. They are anti-God, and anti-church...

Oh how ignorant they are. They are an embodiment, of why God cursed the Earth.

Creation itself, awaits with eager anticipation – it's like creation is craning its neck forwards – Waiting for the children of God to be glorified, because with the glorification of God's children, **creation** will be glorified – **creation** will be renewed...

Creation will not groan any longer... The lion will lay down with the lamb, and the lamb will not be afraid...

This is our great hope.

At the present time, we groan. Creation and the Children of God groan together, because life is tough. Life is painful. Life is filled with troubles, and persecution, and hardship... And so the Children of God and Creation groan together, waiting, for Christ to return, and to make all things new...

And our great hope – it's not a wishful hope – it's a certain hope. Our great hope, is for when we will be glorified. We **will** be renewed, and **so** will creation:

- there will be no more sickness
 - no more disease
 - no need for wheelie-walkers
 - no stiff joints
 - no salt scolds in the soil
 - no disasters
 - no troubles
 - no persecution
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- Just our glorious hope, of living in the glory of God, in the glorious new world.

How does that sound? Anybody keen to get there? I hope we **all** are. But we just patiently wait, for the appointed hour. We don't know when that is... But it's a date that's marked on God's calendar, and we wait patiently until that time.

Questions???

ⁱ wikipedia