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The Bible and the Ecology Crisis

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by

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**Thesis:**

That the Bible is God's revelation to man, which if followed would lead to a world of balance between man and the creation.

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## Introduction

### Is Christianity Culpable?

We as human beings are in the midst of an ecological crisis--to deny this fact is to admit a very narrow and restricted view of life. Most areas of the environment are deeply involved in this crisis and are in some cases literally groaning for an end to it all. This is our world, and it's not a pretty spectacle--at least not for those willing to look at the real world.

As with any crisis--it is logical to inquire "what went wrong?" or "who's to blame?" Therefore, it is logical that men have pondered these questions concerning the current ecological crisis. What this thesis finds illogical about the questions are the answers being proposed--that Christianity and the Bible are at the root of the problem. This is not to say that men in the name of "Christ" have not ignored the teachings of the Bible and twisted the clear scriptures to soothe their own consciences. It will be shown what is the clear teaching of the Bible concerning man, the creation, the Creator, and their interrelationships.

Lynn White has been one of the most outspoken proponents of the theory of the Biblical origin of our current crisis in ecology.<sup>1</sup> He builds his case upon the evidence of history and upon a rather common interpretation of two verses in the first chapter of Genesis.

In this common interpretation, the crucial point is the use of the words "have dominion." The same phrase is used in both verse 26 and in verse 28 of chapter one, and is commonly understood to mean that man was given complete and absolute power over all the creation of the earth. Since man is shaped as God is, he takes on the absolute power of God.<sup>2</sup>

Man is pictured as being clearly on his own, with neither physical restraint nor moral obligation to curb any appetite that might strike his fancy. This is the picture that is extrapolated from those few words in the first chapter of Genesis. God has abdicated from the physical creation and left man to rape, plunder, and pillage all that he surveys.

Is this really the case? Did God make man as the supreme creature--to do whatever he pleased with the physical

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<sup>1</sup>White, Lynn, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," Science (Vol. 155, March 10, 1967), pp 1203-07.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 1205.

creation? Is this the teaching of the Bible and of Christianity? If not, what is the true teaching, and what is the source of our ecological crisis? The answers to these questions compose this thesis.

## Chapter I

### The Case Against Christianity

Ernst Haeckel, the German biologist, first used the word "ecology" just over a century ago. He produced the word from two Greek roots, oikos, or house, and logos, the study of. This word, which is so popular in contemporary America, was almost unknown outside the scientific world until about 15 years ago.

The history of ecology as a formal science is often traced back to the 18th century biologists--who were making great strides in new discoveries; however, it truly remained until the 20th century before the many factors of the environment could all be put together into one discipline. Thus, even the organized body of knowledge called ecology did not exist until this current century.

The realization of an ecological crisis did not come until even later--in the late 1950's and early 1960's a few scientists began to sound the alarm. Rachel Carson's work,

Silent Spring, really helped to popularize the issue.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that there hadn't been warnings on specific problems years before, but the issue of catastrophic global environmental problems was certainly not taken seriously by many.<sup>2</sup>

Even Dr. Barry Commoner in his book, The Closing Circle, estimates that there was not a real crisis until just after World War II. Or even more specifically--from 1946 onward.<sup>3</sup> The ecology crisis is a recent problem, coming into being and mushrooming not just in the past century, but in our current generation.

Ecology is a relatively new science and, likewise, the ecology crisis is a very new problem. Never before has the entire creation been threatened--if not by thermonuclear devices, then by chlorinated hydrocarbons; if not by the exhaust fumes of the world's 200,000,000 motor vehicles, then by the complete breakdown of entire food chains.

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<sup>1</sup>Carson, Rachel, Silent Spring (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Several "prophetic" books were written in the 1930's and 1940's centering primarily on agriculture--but stressing ecological problems nonetheless. Among the chief of these were: Paul B. Sears' Deserts on the March (1935); Edward Faulkner's Plowman's Folly (1943); and Louis Bromfield's From My Experience (1955).

<sup>3</sup>Commoner, Barry, The Closing Circle (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1971), pp 146-50.



In reality, what mankind faces is not an ecology crisis but crises.

What brought these problems on mankind? What series of events, either planned or accidental, led to our current state? Is it even possible to single out an individual or even a group and place the blame firmly and squarely on their shoulders?

The answers to these questions are not just interesting philosophical arguments, but could prove to be the key to the solution of the problems. If the source(s) is/are found, then we simply must remove or change the source of the problems and all that's left is the patching up of the mess that's been done already. This view of seeking out the root source and extirpating it is not the common approach, since it does not permit us to immediately call technology to the rescue and begin the patch-up job; instead, this approach ultimately not only eliminates the source but also points the way to the most effective restoration program.

This is not the first investigation of the roots of the problem, but as will be shown this paper does investigate and present the Biblical teachings on the subject. Which brings us to the "raison d'etre" for the paper--the historical roots of the ecological crisis according to the Bible.

Several sources have investigated this same topic and have come to different conclusions from those presented in this paper.<sup>4</sup> To ignore these men and their writings would be almost as bad as ignoring the crisis about which they write.

Religion (which includes Christianity and the Bible) has been accused of many things, from Lenin's opiate of the people to Tillich's "God is dead" theory (meaning in reality that religion begins and ends with man and his ideas). In addition to these broad charges, Christianity and the Bible have recently been labelled as the culprits behind the world's environmental problem.

Before examining these criticisms in detail, let's understand that the basic underlying premise of the arguments presented is that today's Western society is: 1) Christian and 2) Exclusionist; i.e., excluding man as being a part of the creation. These two philosophical names are equated and tied (at least partially) to the Bible. In direct opposition to this dominant position of the Church (which has brought about the mess we're in and is therefore morally culpable) is

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<sup>4</sup>Three recent works detail the arguments behind the accusations: Lynn White's "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (Science, March 10, 1967); Ian McHarg's Design With Nature (1969); and Frederick Elder's Crisis in Eden (1970). These are the most quoted sources, to date, concerning the topic and therefore are the ones to be covered in this paper.

the elite group of naturalists or inclusionists--those who do include mankind as being part of the physical world.

The noted Lutheran scholar, Lynn White, set out in his classic article on "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" to discover these very answers which we are seeking.<sup>5</sup> He endeavored through the study of Western culture to find the answer to the environmental collapse he saw around him.

The Western origin of modern technology is the first point stressed in the article. Technology and science were wedded here in the Occident in the nineteenth century and have since been the major force present in the world. (Although the Middle and Far East have contributed to man's sum of knowledge, it was in the Western world that the modern heights were achieved.)

So far there has only been a presentation of the obvious. Next comes the not-so-obvious Christian connection. Early scientists such as Galileo, Newton, and Leibnitz held that the studies they engaged in were studies of the Creation of God--they were professing Christians. Christians, who like all other good believers, held that nature was not

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<sup>5</sup>This article won the George Mercer Award of the Ecological Society of America and is quoted by most of the recent writers who hold similar views. It is reprinted in its entirety in Paul K. Anderson's Omega Murder of the Ecosystem and Suicide of Man, Wm. C. Brown Co., 1971.

animistic. They did not feel at one with the physical universe; instead, they were observers, innovators, explorers (and if we are to follow Dr. White's arguments, exploiters of the first magnitude).

In opposition to this anthropocentric view of the Western Church, two Christian alternatives are shown. First, in the Greek Church, were the saints who contemplated rather than actively doing as their counterparts in the West did. Second, there is the example of St. Francis of Assisi who had a very high regard for nature and the creatures in it. He is said to have preached to the sparrows, and even talked a vicious wolf out of his reprobate ways. This is a man to venerate!?! Here is a hero for the ecologically concerned to rally behind.

This is the view that Dr. White presents. Although he does not quote scripture (as some others do), he does talk of the writings of the Church fathers, Tertullian and St. Irenaeus, in showing the anthropocentric nature of Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

Another voice in the throng of accusers is Ian McHarg, professor of landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He is of the same opinion as Dr. White, at

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<sup>6</sup>White, p 1205

least concerning the homocentric nature of the Christian Church.<sup>7</sup> He also traces the history of man's inhumanity to the creation and finds that the teachings of the church have led to the consequences we see today.

McHarg points out that this teaching comes from an understanding of Genesis, the first chapter. This passage of scripture gave support to the pillagers of the earth. In direct contrast to this, he presents the case of the Islamic culture which also venerated Genesis, but chose chapter two as the important part of the creation epic--the part which stressed dressing and keeping the garden.<sup>8</sup>

"Such is our inheritance. A ragbag of ancient views, most of them breeding fear and hostility, based on ignorance, certain to destroy, incapable of creation."<sup>9</sup> This is Ian McHarg's feeling about the root source of our problems in the environment today.

Frederick Elder is the last scholar whose work we shall examine in any great detail. His book, Crisis in Eden, was the fruit of his Master's thesis in theology. (This work

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<sup>7</sup>McHarg, pp 67-78

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p 75

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p 76

bears special investigation, since its origin was a paper similar, at least in purpose, to this one.)

Elder expresses his philosophy concerning the teachings of the Church versus the teachings of progressive men such as White, McHarg, Loren Eiseley, and others as the exclusionists, versus the inclusionists.<sup>10</sup>

Exclusionists feel that man is separate from and actually above the rest of the Creation--that man was created to dominate, subdue, and despoil all that he wished. The diametric opposite view of man is held by the inclusionists. They see man as simply another living organism which must conform to the natural laws of ecology or suffer the consequences.

The differences between the two groups are so vital to the thread of argument, that over half of the book is dedicated to explaining the teachings of the two groups. Elder pits the words of the inclusionists, especially Loren Eiseley, against the exclusionist representatives of the church--Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Herbert Richardson, and

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<sup>10</sup>Elder, p 14

Harvey Cox.<sup>11</sup> Showing the full depth of the inclusionist philosophy, Eiseley is quoted:

"In many a fin and reptile foot I have seen myself passing by--some part of myself, that is, some part that lies unrealized in the momentary shape I inhabit. People have written me harsh letters and castigated me for a lack of faith in man when I have ventured to speak of this matter in print.... They would bring God into the compass of a shop-keeper's understanding and confine Him to those limits, lest He proceed to some unimaginable and shocking act--create, perhaps as a casual after-thought a being more beautiful than man. As for me, I believe nature capable of this, and .... I feel no envy--any more than the frog envies the reptile or an ancestral ape should envy man."<sup>12</sup>

From this quote, from some of the other names mentioned in the field of ecology (including Ernst Haeckel), it should be obvious that there is at least some connection between evolutionary biology and the brand of ecology extant today. Lynn White phrased this statement another way: "It was not until the 18th century that the hypothesis of God became unnecessary to many scientists."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>In addition to Eiseley who merits an entire chapter by himself, chapter 11 is devoted to the words of individuals such as: Barry Commoner, George Gaylord Simpson, Rachel Carson, Ian McHarg (whose work we have already examined and who is a colleague of Loren Eiseley at the University of Pennsylvania), and Eugene P. Odum (better known within the scientific world than in the popular press).

<sup>12</sup>Eiseley, Loren, The Immense Journey (New York, Random House, 1957), pp 24-25.

<sup>13</sup>White, p 1206.

In contrast to the documented, sound arguments of the inclusionists (who need only to point to our ecological crisis in the Western Christian professing world), Elder presents the visionary speculations of the trio of exclusionists mentioned before. Teilhard presents a case for the ultimate fusion of mankind into "Omega" or the ultimate union with God and all mankind--brought about through the devices of technology. Richardson predicts a completely artificial society, dominated by the machines of man, producing and controlling everything. Finally, Cox is shown promulgating the world city or technopolis, dominating the entire face of the earth.

Thus, progressive science argues for a unity with nature, while at least some churchmen are left defending the unrestrained advance of science. What irony!

Since Elder's book was the result of his Master's thesis in theology, he does include some passages from the Bible.<sup>14</sup> Although it should be noted that even he does not place any literal meaning to Biblical quotations since he regards Genesis 1 and 2 as "creation myths."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Most scholarly works on the subject don't mention the Bible, but the popular press has used the Creation account of Genesis as a direct root source for the ecological problem. "Fighting to Save the Earth from Man," Time (vol 95, Feb. 2, 1970), p 62, and "Confessions of a Polluter," Reader's Digest (Sept., 1970), pp 62-63.

<sup>15</sup>Elder, p 81



In the preface, he quotes from the eighth Psalm, contrasting: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (vs.4) with "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (vs.6) This Psalm is a mystery of sorts to Elder as it presents a dichotomy of viewpoint within just two verses of the same Psalm. (Perhaps the obvious Christological explanation of these verses in Hebrews 2:7-9 is too allegorical? Or perhaps the difference of some 700 pages deterred further reading in the same volume?)

The other scripture quoted (this thesis is presenting an exhaustive list of the scriptural arguments for the exclusionist viewpoint as presented by Elder) is the word "dominion" from Genesis 1:28.<sup>16</sup> This is not to say that the discussion of the first two chapters is limited to this one word, but it is the only direct scriptural quotation.

The two creation histories of Genesis 1 and 2 are categorized as being J and P, respectively. This is in accord with at least current higher criticism. Chapter 1 contains the "offensive" word dominion, and is therefore anthropocentric, but even chapter 2 contains man-dominant overtones,

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<sup>16</sup>Other scriptures are referred to, but 1) are not quoted, or 2) do not refer to the exclusionist view.

since man is asked to name the animals (virtually a creative activity in Hebrew thought). Even the man's name, Adam, comes from the Hebrew word for earth, showing his dominance over it (?).

These are the scholars, and this is their argument: Western civilization is threatened by a total collapse of the environment; Western civilization professes Christianity-- which in turn professes to revere the Bible. The logical pattern is therefore established: The Bible influences Christianity, which influences Western man, who destroys his environment. Obviously, the Christian Bible is at the root of our ecology crisis (or crises).

## Chapter II

### Apologies or Apologetics?

The first shots have been fired, and the battle lines have been drawn. Christianity and the Bible have been attacked and the decision must be made--to stand and fight or turn and run, which?

This is an over-dramatization but not so much as one might think. Two of the three main accusers quoted in the first chapter were churchmen. Lynn White is a Lutheran and Frederick Elder is a Presbyterian. Both of these men have taken the approach of backing down from the church's professed doctrine of the supremacy of man in the creation (termed by some anthropocentrism). Instead, they believe that the church must take a view more like St. Francis of Assisi (White)<sup>17</sup> or adopt a pulpit-promulgated campaign for ecological sanity and material asceticism (Elder).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>White, op. cit., p 1206.

<sup>18</sup>Elder, op. cit., pp 137-162.

These men are not alone in their position that the church must change its approach. Eric Rust presents a similar view but goes much further in the application of ecological overtones to the church.<sup>19</sup> He maintains that the entirety of Christian experience must be viewed from the physical creation. Even eschatology must be regarded as simply a completion of the physical creation. The resurrection itself is to be ecological in its fulfillment. "Nature participates in the process of redemption. It becomes united to God. The creatures of the old creation are elevated into creatures of the new creation."<sup>20</sup>

Shades of Pantheism revitalized!!! This is not merely a Christian answer to the call of the ecology crisis--this is a complete about-face and headlong retreat into some form of pseudo-intellectual nature worship. Several other writers, in their zeal for a solution, have gone as far as teaching Albert Schweitzer's belief that plants and animals are man's fellows.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Rust, Eric C., "Nature and Man in Theological Perspective," Review and Expositor (vol. 69, Winter 1972), pp 5-10.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p 21.

<sup>21</sup>Barnette, Henlee H., "Toward an Ecological Ethic," Review and Expositor (vol. 69, Winter 1972), p 26 (cited from Schweitzer's Out of My Life and Thought, 1933).

What we see here is not a return to the scriptures for a reappraisal of what may have been a misunderstanding of certain verses in the first chapter of Genesis--instead we see still another "reason" for rejecting any literal reading of the Bible. Here is a clear case of retreat before the battle has even gotten underway. (We shall investigate the Biblical teaching concerning the supremacy of man and his relative position in the creation in the next chapter.)

As with almost every aspect of human thought and endeavor, there are other views promulgated as to the solution of the church's ecological problem. One such dissenter from the view presented above is John Black.

Black is not a theologian but a professor of natural resources at the University of Edinburgh. He traces some of the same origins as Lynn White but goes much further in tracing scriptural teachings than even most of the theologians who write on the issue.<sup>22</sup> He, too, mentions the scholarly view of the P first chapter of Genesis opposed to the "often contradictory"<sup>23</sup> J second chapter.

In setting up his viewpoint, Black expresses man's relation to God and nature as God : man : nature. Some may view

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<sup>22</sup>Black, John, The Dominion of Man (University Press, Edinburgh, 1970)

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p 31

the use of scientific notation as sterile, but it does succinctly and clearly state his concept.

Perhaps the most significant chapter in the entire work (in respect to the current thesis) regards the "concept of stewardship."<sup>24</sup> In this chapter, the picture of man caring for the earth on behalf of God is presented. He even applies the supposedly anthropocentric phrase "in God's image" to a responsibility of man to so care for the creation as God cares for him.

He further traces the concept of stewardship into the New Testament by pointing out the use of just such a concept in the parables of Christ (Matthew 24, 25 and Luke 12, 19). Here the responsibility and accountability of stewardship are stressed with even more clarity than in the Old Testament.

Here, then, is a scholar who faces the issues of the ecology crisis, its apparent Christian roots, and instead of fleeing to a faith totally foreign to the Western World--takes a closer look at what should have been taught all along. John Black is therefore able to take a less radical approach to the changes in theology necessary for peace with the environment.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp 44-57.

Another viewpoint, more in line with a literal interpretation of scripture, is presented by Douglas Daetz. He, like Black, is not a theologian, but a postdoctoral fellow and lecturer in the department of biology at Stanford University. (I can't help but remark how it is that secular men are more apt to quote scripture literally than are theologians--perhaps because the theologians are on unfamiliar ground in the Bible!?!)

Daetz sums up his feelings in the expression "no more business as usual."<sup>25</sup> He cites scripture to drive home the point:

1. Christ called the disciples to a new way of life, "follow me" (Matthew 4:18-22, 8:21-22, and 9:9).
2. Those who begged off attending the marriage feast due to business were destroyed (Matthew 22:1-7).
3. Beware of covetousness; call upon the Holy Spirit to help us (Luke 12:15, Matthew 6:19-21 and 19:21-22).

This is definitely a theological response to the ecology crisis! The man uses very plain scriptures and simply believes that if they are followed, in terms of ecological understanding in our modern society, we will have the problem whipped.

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<sup>25</sup>Daetz, Douglas, "No More Business as Usual" (Dialog, vol.9, 1970), pp 171-175

This is somewhat similar to Frederick Elder's solution: an emphasis by the clergy from the pulpit toward a new asceticism.<sup>26</sup> The big difference in the presentations is Daetz's reliance on scriptures rather than pure logic or just the words of other men.

Most writers today concede that the P version of the creation in Genesis tends towards anthropocentrism and that a change in attitude is needed within the church in order to combat the root sources of our ecological problem. But not all writers!

James Barr, professor of Semitic Language and Literatures at the University of Manchester, does not concede any such thing. In a very scholarly and yet dogmatic (is it possible to use these two adjectives in the same sentence?) article, he lists his reasons for not agreeing with Lynn White and the others whom we have seen tracing the Christian origins of the ecological crisis:<sup>27</sup>

1. The insistence of the Genesis creation story that all that was created was good.
2. The world of the Genesis creation story is an ordered world.

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<sup>26</sup>Elder, op. cit., pp 137-162.

<sup>27</sup>and the Old Testament" (Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library, vol. 55, Autumn 1972), pp 31-32.

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3. Man's dominion over nature is less exploitation and more leadership.
4. Insights on incipient science and technology as the Old Testament offered, lie primarily in the Wisdom literature. (In other words, modern technology springs from much later writings than Genesis--writings such as Ecclesiastes.)

In direct opposition to White, he claims that indeed a great deal of our modern technology was of Greek origin. The fact that most early scientists were also churchmen proves nothing, since all men of any degree of education were churchmen.

I might mention that Barr does admit to an ecological crisis and differs from other writers only when it comes to the matter of origins.

We can clearly see that there has been a response in theological circles to the challenge that there is a religious and particularly Christian source to our crisis in the environment. The views presented range from the radical adoption of pantheism<sup>28</sup> to more conservative reading of the scriptures.

At least one scholar has questioned the proposition that the Bible creation epic teaches a man-dominated universe,

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<sup>28</sup> Ernst Haeckel, the man who coined the word ecology, presented a very similar view toward nature in his belief which he termed Monism.

which in turn has given rise to the modern problems. The approach taken in answering the accusers, such as Lynn White, was by way of rebuttal: a breaking down of the arguments presented one by one.

The remainder of this thesis presents a positive answer to the same charges against the Bible; i.e., I will present the teachings of the Bible concerning man and his relationship to the creation, principles of conservation, and some observations on city size.

Chapter III  
Is Man Supreme?

An attack has been made against an idea--the idea of the special creation of man as the supreme being on this earth. This idea is then equated with the Judeo-Christian ethic, and it in turn receives the blame for our current ecological crisis.

From the logic presented and from the sources quoted, there can be little doubt, but that the anthropocentric world is the Judeo-Christian ethic. But is this Judeo-Christian ethic the teaching of the Bible or the God of the Bible? (We have seen some use of scripture in the attack, but almost exclusively limited to interpreting a few verses in the book of Genesis.)

Could it be possible that the churches of this society have been wrong in their teachings as relates to God's inspired Word concerning man, his place in the creation, and how to avoid the ecological problems that we face today? What does the Bible say about these teachings of the

churches? Does it teach throughout its pages that man is the center of the creation?

First of all, let's look at the creation epic from a completely Biblical approach, letting the Bible interpret the Bible. (Higher criticism, especially the historical approach, will not be used.)<sup>29</sup>

We read in the very first verse of Genesis 1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (All Biblical quotations are the K.J.V. except where noted.) This is indeed a grand statement, and from this verse comes the Hebrew title for the entire book, בְּרֵאשִׁית, meaning "in the beginning." Thus, the Hebrew view was that the entire book was descriptive and dealing with "the beginning."

The second verse of this first chapter bears some discussion for it marks a change from the condition of the creation in verse one: "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." How does

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<sup>29</sup> George Mendenhall admits "It is not generally understood, however, outside the circle of specialists at least, that the reconstruction of the history of Israel and its religion, which Wellhausen carried out on the foundation of literary analysis, has almost entirely broken down" (emphasis mine). "Biblical History in Transition," The Bible and the Ancient Near East (Doubleday, New York, 1961), p 29.

this indicate a change from the previous verse? Not directly from the verses themselves, but by comparing the scriptures. Isaiah 45:18 says:

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens;  
God himself that formed the earth and made it; he  
hath established it, he created it not in vain, he  
formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and  
there is none else.

In this verse, the word used for vain in the original Hebrew is אֵינִי , the very same word used in Genesis 1:2 for without form! These two scriptures show a change in the creation from verse 1 to verse 2 of Genesis, chapter one. After this change God restores the earth. (The word used for God is אֱלֹהִים a plural form, implying more than one individual, yet acting as a singular force; also see verse 26 where the Creator even speaks in the plural "Let us ...").

What do these interesting points have to do with the question at hand? Simply this, that most do not understand the flow of the creation epic--from an original creation, through a rebellion within that creation (see Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28), to a reforming of the earth and the creation of the physical life we are familiar with today. This flow is not understood nor taught by the church (Roman Catholic Church) or any of its Protestant successors.

Let us now skip on to the verses quoted in the preceding chapter concerning man's "commission":

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26-28)

These verses seem to say, when taken by themselves, with no other scripture consulted, that man is the supreme being-- lord of all creation with no checks or restraints put upon him. But is this the case? Is this the teaching of the Bible?

In the New Testament, the teaching is quite clear:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38) This is the same message that Christ himself brought: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15)

There is no mistaking this clear teaching--change from what you are to the "new man" in Christ. (But perhaps this isn't as clear as it could be since the word repent is used. Webster's first definition of the word is "to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life.")

This same teaching--that of the necessity of man's changing from what he is to something else is throughout the entire Bible, Old Testament as well as New Testament. Man is not held to be the ultimate creation as he exists now in this physical form--but is instead continually pictured as imperfect, fragile, and needing God to make him complete.

Jeremiah wrote of man's innate need to change: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) And again: "The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23). Jeremiah understood and wrote of the inherent need for man to be different from what he was naturally.

Jeremiah was one of the prophets, and therefore of a later, more sophisticated age than the writers of the creation epic; however, his writings are a part of the Bible and as such must be considered as part of what makes up the teaching of the Bible. These and the other scriptures on the next few pages show from their very words that the teaching of God's Word, the Bible, is not that man is the ultimate possible creation, but is created with a missing element. That missing element is God and His way of life! In fact, this necessity of change and man's ultimate potential are incredibly fascinating truths. Yet the complete

explanation of these truths are beyond the scope of this paper which is aimed only at the question of the real root of the ecology crisis.<sup>30</sup>

Since the Bible has been libelously labelled as part of this root source for our crisis today, we are showing the rest of the Biblical story that has been ignored or avoided, or just plain not understood by those who are casting the accusations. One area has especially escaped notice by those who have looked at Genesis 1 and 2 and immediately pointed the finger--that area is the creation story as told (albeit in part) throughout the rest of the Bible.

We have already briefly looked at Isaiah, the 45th chapter, in connection with the understanding of the two-part creation of the earth but we should take a closer look at the entire chapter. This particular chapter, along with several others in the 40's of Isaiah deal directly with creation, God's supremacy and comparisons with all else in the creation.

"I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." (Isaiah 45:12). This verse sums up

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<sup>30</sup>For a more complete explanation of this Biblical teaching, see: Armstrong, Herbert W., "Why Were You Born" Ambassador College Press, Pasadena, 1972).



the topic being discussed in the chapter--God's creation. Significantly, it follows another brief passage showing the inferiority of man in relation to God:

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive where the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? (vs. 9-10)

It should be completely obvious that God did not regard man as the supreme being in the universe, nor did He allow this absolute relationship to be obscured or hidden by not clearly teaching it in His Word--the Holy Bible. God is supreme, He says so plainly in the Bible, man is on a much, much lower plain (although above all the rest of the physical creation), and again God says so in the Bible.

One interesting (although perhaps not significant) point about the structure of the chapter is the recurrence of the phrase "there is none else" or "there is no God beside me." The phrase appears seven times in this one chapter alone:

- vs 5 "there is no God beside me"
- vs 6 "I am the LORD, and there is none else"
- vs 14 "there is none else, there is no other God"  
Jewish publications)
- vs 18 "I am the LORD; and there is none else"

vs 21 "there is no God else beside me" and

vs 21 "there is none beside me"

vs 22 "I am God, and there is none else"

Even if the exact figure seven holds no special meaning in itself (many people and even Bible students hold that this number signifies completion), it certainly is significant that such stress was placed upon the supremacy of God--in the very chapter covering the creation and mentioning again man's relationship to God!

Moving back just five chapters to Isaiah 40, we find that here in verse 15, God inspired: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." Once again--God is supreme, and even men grouped into nations are not even comparable to God!

Even Job, one of the most righteous men ever, when he lifted himself up too high in his own esteem (evidently comparing himself even to God) was allowed to be afflicted by Satan as a trial. Yet even through the agony of the deaths of his children, loss of all his material wealth, and the personal suffering of the boils--Job steadfastly maintained his "superior air." This was too much, and the Bible records God Himself (not the Father) as speaking to Job to set him really straight:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7)

Isn't it interesting that God again used the comparison of the creation (which man is a part of) to show His supremacy? Again and again, the comparison is made, God as the supreme Creator, and man as the created. Man is not held to be perfect or complete, but on the contrary is shown by comparison to be very incomplete. For the next three chapters, God continues His presentation of the facts, demonstrating to Job (and all mankind) that man by himself, even at his best, is still nothing compared to God.

In the final chapter of the book, Job acknowledges his position and very graphically portrays his attitude--a changed attitude:

I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:2-6)

Remember that word repent? It means to change, and here Job confesses his human frailty (when only a few chapters before

he steadfastly maintained his righteousness). What happened? Obviously something was different within Job for him to make such an "about-face." The difference was one which those who link the Bible with the teachings of modern, anthropocentric "Christianity" do not understand. He had learned that God does not regard man as the final, ultimate end product of creation, complete unto himself. That man has the responsibility of acknowledging the higher power of God (as well as His Law).

Man's responsibility is clearly defined in the Bible. In fact, even Solomon who tried to discover the mystery of life on his own came back to the same understanding. Solomon's experiments and conclusions are recorded in the book of Ecclesiastes. Throughout the book, Solomon bemoans the physical state of man which can lead only to death.

All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that swear-eth as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. (Ecclesiastes 9:2-3)

Solomon was morose, and even utterly depressed. He was a case for suicide all the while he was looking for the purpose in human existence. In chapters one through four, he

describes his experiments in pleasure, in riches, in accomplishment, in sex, in eating and drinking. Yet through all these experiments, without God, he found no lasting happiness. Finally, in the twelfth chapter, Solomon concludes that one should "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," (vs. 1) and "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (vs. 13)

Even Solomon, who approached the problem of human life and its purpose without God, came back and resolved in the end that to fear God, the Creator, and to keep His commandments was the whole of man. (The noun duty is in italics--showing that it was not part of the original text but was added to clarify the meaning. In most such cases in the King James translation, the word inserted is a form of the verb to be or a pronoun needed to make sense in the English.) Man therefore is shown by this passage to have been created to fear God and keep his commandments--not created to do as he jolly well pleases!

It is very interesting that wherever the creation is mentioned there is close at hand the lesson of man's place in it. Not the place pictured by the anthropocentrists, with man in complete charge of everything and with no authority to give an answer to for his actions. Instead, man is shown,

again and again, to have been created at a lower level than God. Man is not the ultimate creation in this physical form, but is the raw material for a change into the ultimate.

We have already seen the New Testament's teaching of a need for change in man, but have not yet looked to see if any comparisons are made using the creation, as there are in the Old Testament. Are there any passages in this section of the Bible (which is at least purported to be believed by "Christianity"--while the Old Testament is rejected by some who call themselves Christian) dealing with the physical creation and man's relationship to it? If so, where are they?

Even among those who do accept both Testaments it is commonly felt that the Old Testament was the domain of the Father, while the New Testament is the territory of the Son. This simply is not so; in fact, the Son is the God of the Old Testament<sup>31</sup> and the Father is really only understood through the New Testament. Strange how the truth of the Bible is completely opposite from what is so commonly believed!

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<sup>31</sup>Psalm 110:1 gives a glimmer of understanding of the Father-Son relationship as understood by David. Christ explained this verse as showing His Godship in Matthew 22:41-46.

The aspect of the creation is one of the most clear in showing Jesus Christ as the God of the Old Testament. The apostle John began his gospel with this amazing truth:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

The Word is clearly understood to be Jesus Christ; as John goes on to explain that the Word brought light to the world, that John the Baptist pointed to the Word, and that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. (vs. 4-14)

The apostle Paul also wrote of Christ's creation of the world in three separate letters: Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16, and Hebrews 1:2. Again we see that the assumptions of supposed Christianity are simply not true! Jesus Christ was the member of the God family who was known in the Old Testament, and it was He who was the Creator God!

Let's review what we have seen so far. First of all-- many today believe that the Judeo-Christian ethic of an anthropocentric creation is the root of our ecological crisis. These people link the Bible to this concept by quoting from Genesis, the first chapter (and virtually nowhere else in scripture!).

This third chapter has shown what the teaching of the Bible is concerning man and the creation. Man was created

by God, but created imperfect. Man was made to need His Maker and to follow the laws that his Maker gave him. The Bible does not teach that man is without responsibility to God and to God's laws; on the contrary, man is shown throughout scripture, in both testaments, to be incomplete by himself and to require change in his life before he can be complete.

Let's compare these facts. The Western world is in the midst of an environmental crisis. The Western world professes Christianity as its primary religion (which in turn holds the Bible as its sacred book.) Christianity has been attacked by scientists, historians, and journalists as promulgating a man-centered universe which has caused our environmental crisis. Yet, the Bible does not teach such a doctrine of the supremacy of man. This is an absolute conflict!

Since Christianity's teachings and the Bible's teachings are both so clear and yet so different--we must state that the Christianity at large in the world today is not based upon the Bible. Thus, the primary religion in the Western world has, at the very least, allowed our current environmental crisis to occur.

What is left now in this thesis is to show the positive side of the Biblical teaching--those things that have been

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available to mankind which would have prevented the environmental crisis from occurring and which could solve the current crisis if only heeded!

Chapter IV  
Biblical Conservation

In the last chapter we saw that the anthropocentric doctrine as recognized in the world today did not come from the Bible. This chapter will further probe the accusations against the Bible, especially in the area of conservation.

It has been claimed that man was to have dominion over the earth by conquering it--by waging a war against the rest of the creation. This is simply not the teaching of the Bible!

In two separate places in the Old Testament, God explicitly promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-30). The blessings promised include good weather, bountiful crops, and happy, healthy offspring; and the curses specify just the opposite. What do these verses have to do with the subject at hand? Plenty! Both the blessings and cursings relate to the keeping of commandments and statutes (Leviticus 26:3, Deuteronomy 30:10). This shows a need to

obey more than simply the Ten Commandments in order to fully receive God's blessings.

Without belaboring the point, the commandments refer to the ten major rules for human conduct; the statutes refer to more specific regulations--dealing typically with day-to-day living. (Ordinances provide still further definition of law, and judgments provide not only a specific definition of a wrong deed, but the sentence or judgment concerning it.)

The statutes, then, embellish the basic law of love to God and love to man (Matthew 22:37-40). Before we consider the statutes, however, first we should understand a very striking relationship: We are in an ecological crisis and God promised an ecological crisis if man wouldn't obey His commandments and His statutes.

This relationship of our current crisis and disobedience to God's law is only understood by a very literal understanding of the Bible. This in fact is the key to the misunderstanding concerning the Bible and our ecological problems. It is assumed that mankind (especially Western Christian professing mankind) has been following the Bible as a guide for conduct, and that since mankind is anthropocentric and has brought about the present condition in the environment, the Bible must be at the source.

In reality, what we see in the world today is the result of man ignoring or misinterpreting the Bible (i.e., understanding the Bible to be only allegorical). Grasping the relationship between the penalties for sin and our ecological crisis will aid in reading the rest of this chapter.

Starting with the same scriptures used to accuse the Bible, we find that man is not given one simple command: "subdue" (Genesis 1:28). Instead, God gave man several responsibilities including to "be fruitful" (which will be covered in the next chapter) and to "replenish the earth."<sup>32</sup> These commands are repeated here since Noah and his sons were in the same relative position as Adam--the progenitors of all mankind to follow. Thus, the human race was now narrowed down to only eight individuals and needed a restatement of these basic guidelines.

Still later, when the nation of Israel was leaving Egypt and slavery for the promised land and freedom, further

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<sup>32</sup>The Hebrew word **יָשַׁב** is here translated replenish, but can also mean to fulfill, to fill, to complete, or even inserting as with the setting of a gem. (Davidson, Benjamin, The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (Bagster, London, 1967), p 488.) With this further understanding of the word translated replenish, it seems incongruous to maintain that this verse gives license to destroy the earth when it also says to fill full the creation.

guidelines regarding the care of the earth were given. These guidelines are included in the statutes we mentioned earlier.

One very obvious rule that God gave to Israel was that of the land sabbaths. Every seventh year, the land was to lie fallow. It was not to be plowed or planted, neither was it to be harvested (Leviticus 25:3-4).

In addition to this command, God provided a promised blessing for obedience--He promised that there would be enough harvested in the sixth year to last until the eighth year when agricultural activities could begin again. As with all of the other laws of God, there is a promised blessing for obedience. What better promise for a farm family than to have one year in seven in which the land did not have to be worked? This means that even humble farming folks would have a sabbatical every seventh year--in addition to college and university professors.

The most unfortunate thing about this particular law is that it was never consistently kept, neither in ancient Israel nor by any modern nation. This is apparent when comparing two scriptures: Leviticus 26:34-35 and Jeremiah 25:11. In the first, God promises that the land will receive its sabbaths--even if it means sending Israel away into captivity. The second scripture delineates the length

of time Judah was to spend in captivity--70 years. By putting these two scriptures together, we can understand that evidently the law of the seventh year land rest was not kept and the blessings promised were therefore not received.

Parallel with the land rest is the law of the Jubilee. The Jubilee was to be celebrated every fifty years and also marked a land rest (Leviticus 25 and 27). However, like the land sabbaths, it was never kept; therefore, the blessings that were based upon obedience to the law were never realized. (The Jubilee will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.)

Although the land rest is probably the most obvious of the laws or statutes governing agriculture or conservation, there are others just as important. The following is a list of the most obvious laws pertaining to the agricultural economy and conservation:

1. Tithes are to be paid of all increases (Deuteronomy 14:22-29).
2. Clean animals only are to be used for food (Leviticus 11:1-23 and Deuteronomy 14:1-20).
3. Take care of the poor by not gleaning the corners of the fields (Leviticus 19:9-10), not picking up forgotten sheaves from your field (Deuteronomy 24:19), and allowing the poor to reap any volunteer crops during the years of land rest (Exodus 23:10-11).
4. Allow a mother bird to live when encountered in the field (Deuteronomy 22:6-7).

5. Not to destroy fruit trees when engaged in battle (Deuteronomy 20:19).
6. Keep cattle purebred and seed pure for sowing (Leviticus 19:19).

This is not to say that all of agricultural science is summed up in these few brief statements; however, the keys to sound agricultural policy--backed up by the blessings of God are found in these words. These laws, if followed, would bring prosperity, good health, and even good weather! This sounds incredible, especially to us who see the world through eyes tainted by anti-supernatural bias. Yet this is what the Bible teaches concerning agriculture and conservation.

Again, I must point out that no nation has ever experienced the blessings that would come from obeying these laws--yet we certainly can see that the whole earth is experiencing the curses that come from not obeying them.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Some may argue that these are Old Testament laws, now done away by the sacrifice of Christ--yet Christ Himself said "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17)

## Chapter V

### What Sized Cities?

Perhaps the most popular area in the current flurry of activities to curb the ecology crisis is in population control. Organizations such as ZPG (Zero Population Growth) and Planned Parenthood have set a goal to bring the human birthrate into line with the human death rate--effecting no net gain in population.

There are several reasons for desiring no further growth in human population, but the chief reason is simply a limited supply of the necessities for life. Almost two centuries ago, Thomas Malthus proposed a theory on population, now commonly called the "Dismal Theorum."<sup>34</sup> The theory stated that there were definite limits to the production of food, availabilities of water, and other vital items for human existence. The fact that there are physical limitations on the necessities for human life meant to Malthus

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<sup>34</sup>Malthus, T.R., "An Essay on the Principle of Population" (Johnson, London, 1798).

*Craig White*



that there must be a limit to the number of human beings who could comfortably live on this earth.

The Malthusian theory didn't gain much acceptance until the current century and only during our current crisis in the environment has the theory been recognized as a law of population which applies to us humans, as well as the already acknowledged lower life forms.

Parallel to the population control problem are the problems of large groups of people gathered into relatively small areas--these are the problems of cities. City problems are typically viewed primarily as a matter of decay of a perfectly fine and workable organization which simply needs refurbishing. Is this truly the case? Or are cities inherently contrary to peaceful, normal existence?

Beginning in 1968, the National Institute of Mental Health conducted an experiment in Utopia.<sup>35</sup> This experiment was conducted under the direction of a Dr. John Calhoun, who constructed a disease and predator-free environment in which to breed mice. Five mouse couples were placed in the cubicle (which was designed to support 4,000 mice). These mice bred, and so did succeeding generations until the population reached 2,200. At this point, hostilities and other

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<sup>35</sup>Corbett, Robert, "...could the same thing happen to us," (Copley News Service, January 31, 1973).

mental aberrations came to the surface. Mice were no longer interested in breeding; they either fought to the death or became recluse--interested only in eating, drinking, and sleeping.

The population of this mouse Utopia dwindled, and just four and one-half years after the experiment was begun, the last mouse died! Dr. Calhoun and other psychiatrists and sociologists believe this same pattern exists in large groups of people. People, when confined to an environment (even where disease and other problems have all but been totally eradicated) where population is uncontrolled, experience a breakdown of social values and ultimately die!

Since we are investigating in this part of the thesis what the Bible has to say about how man should be living, let's take a look at what the Bible has to say about cities. Are cities right or are they wrong? If they are right, how should they be organized and how large should they be?

The first question of whether or not to even have cities is basic to the issue at hand. Obviously, God has not always been pleased with the conduct within cities--witness the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the confusion of languages at Babel, and the numerous warnings to the various city-states throughout the Old Testament. Yet not

even all this can be construed to mean a categorial condemnation of cities.

Cities are not, of themselves, wrong--if they were, God would not have represented the establishment of His government in the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21). In fact, this spiritually pictured city outdoes by a couple orders of magnitude, even the largest of man's cities today!

Why then do we have problems with cities; why did the mouse Utopia and our cities today suffer from imminent collapse? Could it be that the cities are structured or organized wrongly? Or perhaps the population density and life style are not really conducive for mankind?

In Isaiah, the fifth chapter, many evils are denounced, but among the first mentioned are the evils of overcrowding. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." (Isaiah 5:8)

In addition to the prophecy of Isaiah, others of the prophets joined in the familiar refrain--denouncing the oppression of the poor, the dishonest measure, the bribed officials, and the general lack of concern for humanity and immense concern for the economic gain. These and still other scriptures show that the cities are cursed for specific reasons:

1. "joining house to house" (Isaiah 5:8)
2. "if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:11)  
*APPROVE OF THIS DOLE!* *GO DOWN!* *"BAN" ECONOMIC POLICY, 1980!*
3. "making the ephah small, the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit" (Amos 8:5)
4. "Call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20)
5. "devour widows' houses" (Matthew 23:14) and "buy the poor for silver" (Amos 8:6)
6. "they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Amos 5:12)
7. "they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied Baal, and walked after things that do not profit" (Jeremiah 2:8)

Cities themselves are not wrong; in fact, God Himself will reign on this earth from a city! What is wrong with cities are the people and their sins. One of the foremost of these is the sin of greed.

God foresaw this tendency toward greed and proscribed against it by a national law providing for an economic housecleaning every fifty years. (See Leviticus 25 and 27.) This time was called the year of the Jubilee. It was celebrated by a land rest, by the return of real property to its

rightful owners, and by the freedom of all Israelites made slaves through debt.<sup>36</sup> Admittedly, very little is known about the Jubilee, probably because, like the seventh year land rest, it was rarely if ever kept; however, what we do know from the Bible points to this definite way to stop generations of poverty from developing.

Still another consideration about cities is the optimum size for a city. As we have already seen, the new Jerusalem is depicted as being immense--far larger than any megalopolis in existence even today! Yet, what will be the life style--a crowded apartment dwelling with scarcely a blade of grass to be seen? Hardly, if we will only read the prophecies with care.

Each individual will have available greenery, "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." (Micah 4:4. Although this applies directly to the millenium, the carry-over to the post-millennial age of peace is small compared to the chasm separating today's society from the millenium.)

*In new Jerusalem too*

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<sup>36</sup>Exodus 21:1-11 shows that most slaves were to be freed after six years of service, except if he chose to remain a slave, but the wording of Leviticus 25:39-41 implies that in the Jubilee all Israelite slaves are to be set free with no exceptions.

One other interesting study that tends to point to a rather low population density are the censuses taken in ancient Israel and the allotment for the tribe of Levi. On three separate occasions a census was taken in the Old Testament: Numbers 1, Numbers 26 and II Samuel 24. (The results of these enumerations are listed on a following page titled: A Comparison of the Censuses of Israel.)

Looking into the figures given as a result of the censuses could lead to a lot of interesting speculation; however, we will limit ourselves to investigating the tribe of Levi. This tribe was numbered in a special way--counting all males from one month old and upward. If we are to assume that the female population was roughly equivalent, then the tribe of Levi would have numbered about 46,000 people at the time Israel entered the promised land. This is a significant figure in that we also know more about the inheritance of the tribe of Levi than of any of the other tribes, because all of the Levite cities are named, and no further possession was given to the tribe; i.e., the Levites were restricted to the land immediately around the cities they were to receive, unlike the other tribes which received not only the cities but the open countryside between the cities. (See Joshua 21 and the chart labelled Levite Cities for a complete list of all forty-eight cities.)

AMBASSADOR  
COLLEGE IIRPADV

What this study of the tribe of Levi means is that there were 958 individuals in each city if we assume an arithmetic mean for the "average" city size. This is probably not realistic since some of the Levite cities were of more importance than others--especially the six cities of refuge, all of which were Levite. This means that there probably was some difference in size; however, in dealing with so few people and so many towns by comparison, a figure slightly under 1,000 as an "average" is most likely correct.

Now that we have ascertained an average town size for the tribe of Levi, just how much land did each individual have to support his livestock and provide recreation for the towns? Assuming the smallest commonly accepted unit for the cubit (18"), and using the figures from Numbers 35:5 (2000 cubits by 2000 cubits), we see that each Levite city or town had 9,000,000 square feet of room, or over 200 acres of ground! (Actual figures work out to be 206.6 acres, but a certain amount must be used up by the buildings of the town.)

When this figure of 200 acres is divided by the average population of 1,000, we get 4.6 persons per acre. Thus, even the most urbanized of all the Israelite tribes, the tribe of Levi, had over one-fifth of an acre of land per man, woman and child--outside the city! This would be a

*AN "MLOTMENT"!*  
plot larger than two football fields (300 feet by 300 feet).

(For comparison, a chart of the population densities of the counties which contain the ten largest U.S. cities is included.)



A Comparison of the Censuses of Israel

<u>Tribe</u>	<u>Numbers 1-3</u>	<u>Numbers 26</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>II Samuel 24**</u>	<u>Change</u>
Reuben	46,500	43,730	-6%		
Simeon	59,300	22,200	-63%		
Gad	45,650	40,500	-11%		
Issachar	54,400	64,300	+18%		
Zebulun	57,400	60,500	+5%		
Ephriam	40,500	32,500	-20%		
Manasseh	32,200	52,700	+64%		
(Joseph)	(72,700)	(85,200)	+17%		
Benjamin	35,400	45,600	+29%		
Dan	62,700	64,400	+3%		
Asher	41,500	53,400	+29%		
Naphtali	<u>53,400</u>	<u>45,400</u>	-15%		
Subtotal	528,950	525,280	-.7%	800,000	+52%
Judah	<u>74,600</u>	<u>76,500</u>	+3%	<u>500,000</u>	<u>+554%</u>
Subtotal	603,550	601,730	-.3%	1,300,000	+116%
Levi*	<u>22,000</u>	<u>23,000</u>	+5%		
TOTAL	<u>625,550</u>	<u>624,780</u>	-.1%		

\*All the tribes except Levi were numbered by males 20 and over only--Levi was numbered by all males 1 month old and older; the census of the tribe of Levi is therefore more complete--since it gives the entire picture of the popula- (adult and minors).

\*\*This census gave only the three totals listed and no figures for individual tribes.

Population Densities of the Counties Containing  
the Ten Largest Cities in the U.S.A.<sup>37</sup>

<u>County</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Area in Acres</u>	<u>Density Per Acre</u>
New York	New York	1,509,327	14,720	102.5
Kings	New York	2,562,245	44,800	57.2
Bronx	New York	1,441,403	26,240	54.9
Queens	New York	1,964,147	69,120	28.4
Richmond	New York	294,608	37,120	7.9
	NY Total	7,771,730	192,000	40.5
Cook	Chicago	5,427,237	610,560	8.8
Los Angeles	Los Angeles	6,974,103	2,604,160	2.7*
Philadelphia	Philadelphia	1,927,863	81,280	23.7
Wayne	Detroit	2,642,348	387,200	6.8
Harris	Houston	1,722,336	1,102,720	1.6*
(Independent city)	Baltimore	895,222	49,280	18.2
Dallas	Dallas	1,316,289	560,000	2.3*
District of Columbia	Washington	764,000	39,040	19.6
Marion	Indianapolis	785,085	256,000	3.1*

\* Four of the ten largest cities in the United States are located in counties where the population density is less than that of the Levite towns of the Old Testament. However, it should be pointed out that these counties contain much land that is not accessible to the inner city dweller. Los Angeles County contains, for example, the Angeles National Forest and portions of the Mojave Desert.

<sup>37</sup> Figures are from The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1971 (Newspaper Enterprise Association, NY, 1970), pp 444-461.

Levite Cities  
(Joshua 21)

Judah and Simeon

- 1 Hebron\*  
(also called Kirjath-arba)
- 2 Libnah
- 3 Jattir
- 4 Eshtemoa
- 5 Holon
- 6 Debir
- 7 Ain
- 8 Juttah
- 9 Beth-shemesh

Benjamin

- 10 Gibeon
- 11 Geba
- 12 Anathoth
- 13 Almon

Ephraim

- 14 Shechem\*
- 15 Gezer
- 16 Kibzaim
- 17 Beth-horon

Dan

- 18 Eltekeh
- 19 Gibbethon
- 20 Aijalon
- 21 Gath-rimmon

Manasseh

- 22 Tanach
- 23 Gath-rimmon
- 24 Golan in Bashan\*
- 25 Beesh-terah

Issachar

- 26 Kishron
- 27 Dabareh
- 28 Jarmuth
- 29 En-gannim

Asher

- 30 Mishal
- 31 Abdon
- 32 Helkath
- 33 Rehob

Naphtali

- 34 Kedesh in Galilee\*
- 35 Hammoth-dor
- 36 Kartan

Zebulun

- 37 Jokneam
- 38 Kartah
- 39 Dimnah
- 40 Nahalal

Reuben

- 41 Bezer\*
- 42 Jahazah
- 43 Kedemoth
- 44 Mephaath

Gad

- 45 Ramoth in Gilead\*
- 46 Mahanaim
- 47 Heshbon
- 48 Jazer

\* Cities of Refuge (Joshua 21:7-8)

## Conclusion

### The Origin of the Ecology Crisis

There is a school of thought that is gaining popularity among certain scholars that the Bible is connected with the root sources of the ecology crisis. Their claims are based upon the teachings of the majority of Christian churches regarding the anthropocentric nature of the creation and upon the word "subdue" as used in Genesis 1:26,28.

Several individuals have answered these charges, but to date the most scriptural answers have come from the ranks of the laity--while the theologians choose to answer from logic, quotations of other men, and force of rhetoric. Although some of the answers given are correct, none of them has really established the cause of the ecology crisis as this thesis does.

In the last three chapters we have seen: The idea of an anthropocentric creation rejected by Biblical teachings, the statutes governing right conservation and agriculture, and some very interesting notes on the proper population density of cities (if not even the proper size for cities).

We have clearly demonstrated that although many Christians may hold man-dominant views that have led to problems in the environment, the Bible does not teach this.

What the Bible does teach is a system of law and order, with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. This is the clear and direct teaching of the Bible and the answer to the dilemma as to the source of our ecological crisis.

Disobedience to the laws of God as revealed in the Bible brings curses, curses which are expressed in terms of the very symptoms we see as the ecology crisis today! The real cause of our problems is not man's following the dictates of God's Word, but just the opposite: The cause of our problems is man's disobedience to the Word of God, or sin! (I John 3:4)

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