

Reference: VARIOUSChurch: GRACE Date: 9/14/2011

Creation, Providence and the Environment

Purpose: To review the elements of the doctrines of the creation and providence that are relevant to developing a Biblical position on the environment.

1. Introduction

So far have covered the basic toolbox of doctrines - WCF

Selected the ones we will use for this job

We looked at the character and attributes of God

What did we see that was relevant to view on the environment?

Examined God's Decree – what did this tell us?

Then began to examine specific parts of God's plan

Last time, purposes of Creation

Why did framers of the Confession order the chapters this way?

This week,

- Creation and the mandate given to man
- Providence and the outworking of God's plan

Remember we are also learning how we can approach any contemporary issue to develop a Biblical view.

2. Creation

Will look mainly at first 2 chapters of Genesis.

Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. **28** 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."** **29** Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; **30** and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food"; and it was so. **31** God saw all that He had made, and behold, **it was very good**. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep [guard] it.

Genesis 2:19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought *them* to the man to see

what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. **20** The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

2.1. *The nature of God's creation*

What do we learn from Genesis about creation?

How did God view it before the fall?

"Very good" What does this mean?

No sin, all perfect, flawless

What is the significance of this for a view on the environment?

Were there any environmental problems at that time?

Holes in ozone layer?

Any global warming?

Anything that would harm man or other creatures? No.

Why not? Creation was perfect

So where have all environmental issues come from? Sin.

Will see more under the doctrine of the fall

2.2. *Man in God's creation*

2.2.1. What was man like?

What do we know about man?

Made in God's image – perfect reflection of His character

Creative, moral, also "very good"

2.2.2. What position did man have?

He was steward of the earth for God

He was given dominion over all other creatures

He named the animals

Practical demonstration of his authority and responsibility

Showed his primacy among created things on earth

Given every plant to eat

Pinnacle of God's creation

2.2.3. What was man commanded to do?

What specific responsibilities did Adam have in Eden?

To work it and to guard it (1:28, 2:15)

What is this called in theology? The cultural mandate

2.2.4. The attitude of man in God's creation

What do we know about man's heart at this time?

How would he have reacted to these responsibilities from God?

How would he have borne the duties He was given?

What would he have sought to do?

To do all he was commanded gladly, willingly and well

All done for the glory of God

Why is it important to consider these things as we assemble a Christian view on the environment?

3. Providence

What is God's Providence?

The working out of His decree, with creation as the stage

God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy WCF 5:1

God is the first cause but His Providence unfolds through the agency of second causes

He ordinarily works out His purposes through the use of means

His Providence naturally includes the outworking of everything in his Decree - including the fall and all sins, so that they were certain to happen but yet God is not the author or cause of the sin.

His providence takes care of His church in a most special manner

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

What is the significance of this concerning the environment?

4. Conclusions

- ☐ When God Completed the creation, it was "very good"
- ☐ It revealed some characteristics of its Creator
- ☐ All environmental issues come from sin
- ☐ Even those not performed directly by man
- ☐ Man was perfect
- ☐ Made in the image of His Creator
- ☐ He was the pinnacle of created things on earth
- ☐ Commanded to rule over the earth as steward
- ☐ To tend the garden, defend it, to fill the earth and subdue it
- ☐ He delighted in obeying the commands of His Creator
- ☐ Some Scriptures: Genesis 1:27-31; 2:15 & 2:19

- ☐ God the great creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things...
- ☐ God is in control, working out His decree as first cause or through 2nd causes
- ☐ God's providence includes man's sinful acts, yet He is not the author of sin
- ☐ God's providence is directed towards the sanctification of His people
- ☐ Towards the growth and spiritual prosperity of the church
- ☐ It is directed towards the judgment of the ungodly
- ☐ Some Scriptures: Heb 1:3; Rom 9:17; Ps 135:6; 2 Chron 32:25-26, 31; 2Cor 12:7-9; Ps 77; Rom 1:24-28, 11:7-8; Matt 13:12; Mat 16:18; Acts 2:47; Gen 9:11-13; Ecc 12:13&14

Does this all have any relevance to the environment?

Any thoughts at this stage?

Next week, we will see what the fall has done to all this

Has anything changed?

What was affected?

What are the outcomes for the environment?