

# Global Warming: The Great Understatement

By Daryl Wingerd

According to widely publicized scientific studies, the carbon emissions from cars, power plants, and factories are causing our planet to lose its protective layer of atmospheric ozone. This loss is enabling more and more of the sun's rays to penetrate, which in turn is gradually heating up the surface of the earth. Eventually, this warming of the earth will melt the polar ice caps and mountain snow packs, causing severe flooding, and will so drastically affect global weather patterns that worldwide calamity will result—so they say.

Anyone who listens to the news even occasionally will admit that this doomsday view of global warming has become the “hottest” concern among environmentalists. Crusades to save the whales, the baby seals, and the spotted owl have all taken a back seat to saving the planet. Some even theorize that global warming could produce the eventual extinction of the human race.

On the one hand, I'm all for taking care of the earth. After all, God assigned to mankind the responsibility for ruling over this beautiful sphere (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 8:6-8). We should take this responsibility seriously. It is sinful and foolish to carelessly and unnecessarily destroy God's creation and spoil the place in which we live.

On the other hand, I hope everyone will look at the bigger picture. Global warming is neither the most serious nor the final threat to mankind. This earth is only our temporary home, and no matter how many degrees it is warmed through our environmental negligence, God will one day melt it completely.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and all its works will be burned up. . . . the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat (2 Pet. 3:10, 12).

The event described here is not the end result of gradual global warming, but rather a sudden and universal conflagration. The earth will not merely be warmed, it will vanish like a dry leaf in front of a flame-thrower. And this destruction will not be the result of environmental negligence. It will be the just response of a holy God to sin. On that day, along with the destruction of the earth, “the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty



angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess. 1:8).

Additionally, Peter tells us that this day will not be announced in advance. It will come suddenly, secretly—“like a thief” (2 Pet. 3:10). Just before God's consuming fire descends on the earth, life will be going on as usual. “While they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly” (1 Thess. 5:3). No one, not even the most astute environmental scientist, will be able to discern the coming of this day by looking at thermal satellite imagery, mercury climbing in a thermometer, or gradually rising ocean levels.

The threat of global warming may or may not be serious, but in either case it is not the apocalyptic dilemma it is often made out to be. God assures us that until His sudden and dramatic destruction of the earth by fire, seasons and weather patterns will remain substantially normal. “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22).

Please take care of the earth as well as you can. But for the sake of your own eternal soul, do not become caught up in the popular thinking that the planet Earth is our mother or our savior, or that we can preserve the human race indefinitely through science and global cooperation. The God who created this universe and everything in it promises to destroy this planet along with all who have made it their god. While the earth may or may not be warming, God's wrath toward those who reject Christ is definitely becoming hotter and hotter every moment. They are “storing up wrath for [themselves] in the day of wrath and of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5).

Finally, after the destruction of this earth, all who know and love Jesus Christ will be established forever in God's new creation. He will not leave His people without a home, but will create “new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13), and where the temperature will always be just right.

So what is your future? Will you perish along with the current earth under the blast furnace of God's wrath, or will you live forever in the new earth? There is no concern hotter than this.

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