

THEME: Climate

LOOKING BACK

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

CONNECT

The Global Crisis

Resources

Bibles, dress-up clothes

Icebreaker Activity - Examining the Crisis

Things to Prepare: Dress-up clothes (e.g., white shirt/lab coat, plastic glasses, Bible, clerical collar), two chairs

Activity – The Interview:

1. Ask three people to role-play an interview while the rest watch.
2. One person will be the interviewer, and the others will be the interviewees. One person will be an Environmental Scientist (wearing a lab coat and glasses), and one will be a Christian Minister (perhaps with a Bible or a clerical collar).
3. Give notecards (provided at the end of this session's notes) to the three people in the role play and ask them to read from their cards. Ask the interviewer to ask a question and hear from the Scientist first, then from the Christian Minister.

Discuss

- Which of the two guests in the interview knows more about climate change? The Christian Minister knows more than the most educated Scientist because the Minister knows about climate change from God's perspective, who is the Creator and King of the entire universe.
- Scientists and the media are telling us that we must save the planet. What did the Minister have to say about this? The Minister said we are the stewards of the environment, but our job is not to save it. There is only one Savior of the planet, and His name is Jesus.
- What issue is Jesus more concerned about than climate change? Jesus is concerned that there are still so many people who don't know Him and are not preparing for His return.
- Did you know that the Bible talks about climate change? Hands up if you knew it. Today, we will learn about some climate change scriptures.

TRUTH TO KNOW

Faith Focus: Climate Signs

Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in **Matthew 24**.

Did you know the Bible tells us there will be climate changes in the days leading up to Jesus' return?

Background to This Bible Passage

Matthew 24 opens with Jesus and His disciples. They have just left the temple, and Jesus is telling them it will be destroyed one day. They walked up to the Mount of Olives, and Jesus' disciples wanted to know more about the signs of His return and the end of the age. Jesus begins to tell them about the signs that would come before He returns to the earth. We have already learned about some of these signs, including deception, lawlessness, and people groups rising up against other people groups.

The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **Matthew 24:1-8**.

- Do you see evidence of climate change in this passage? In **Matthew 24:1-8**, Jesus warned His disciples of deception and wars. He also told them that earthquakes and famines would happen in various places around the earth. Jesus said that these were just the beginning of birth pains. Jesus explained that these things must happen and were signs of His coming.

Climate change will and must happen, and it will worsen as the time for Jesus' return approaches. Jesus gave the Apostle John a download of what was to come in the season of the time of the end. As John was on the island of Patmos writing the book of Revelation, he had several visions of environmental changes that would happen as the climate crisis worsened.

- Read **Revelation 8:7-11**. What evidence of climate change do you see? There is the mention of trees and grass burning up, sea creatures dying, ships being destroyed (presumably by storms), and water contamination.
- In the book of Revelation, John was given revelation of climate change. The fact that we are seeing signs of climate change now confirms that all is happening, as God has said.
- Who spotted the climate change first – God or the scientists? God did. He knew about it before it even started happening and prophesied it in the Bible.
- In light of this, how does God want us to respond to climate change? Point people to God. Show them that these are warnings that He will be coming back soon. Do our part to take care of the planet. Do not be afraid.

Activity Suggestion - Reframing the Crisis

Aim: Consider how God wants us to respond to Climate Change.

Things to Prepare:

- Print the letter-size (A4) picture of the earth (see last page of session notes). If you have a larger group, print enough copies for people to work in threes.
- Have pens/pencils/colored pencils available for all.
- Provide enough blank ledger-size (A3) sheets for a few groups.
- Tape or glue one picture of the earth on each ledger-size (A3) paper, leaving a border around the picture. Write the following words/phrases on the border of one of the posters, the Media Poster: "Crisis"; "Urgent"; "Focus on the Issue"; "Save the Planet!" Example:



Activity – "Response Posters":

1. Display the Media Poster for all to see.
2. Have people write new words/phrases around the border of their group's poster from a Christian perspective. This is a kind of reframing of the climate change crisis. (Examples of new words/phrases: prophesied in the Bible; a sign of the times; tell people about Jesus; care for the planet; be good stewards; focus on Jesus.)

Discuss - How to Respond

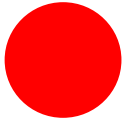
- What have you seen and learned through this activity?
- Scientists and the media are pumping out their own narratives about climate change. This activity has given us some ideas about reframing this issue in biblical terms. Which is your favorite response, and why? People share their own thoughts.
- Some people who do not know or understand the biblical narrative fear climate change. They may feel worried or have a sense of despair about it. What did Jesus say in **Matthew 24:6**? He said not to be alarmed when we see these things happen.
- What can we do to help people have a different perspective about climate change? We can share with people that Jesus is the Savior and that He is returning to make everything new.

READY TO GO

Thinking about how this affects our lives and our response to the signs we see.

Think about what you will do to reframe the climate change global issue.

TIME FOR ACTION



1. “STOP & THINK” Action Point

Take two minutes to think about your life. How has your perspective on global warming and climate change been reframed today?



2. “PAUSE TO PRAY” Action Point

Have a conversation with God about today’s lesson. Ask Him to direct your response to the issue to align with His heart and plans.



3. “GO & DO” Action Point

Find someone and share God’s perspective on climate change with them. Ask them if this affects how they look at the issue today.

SPRINGBOARD

Discuss what topic you would like to do together next time. After this session, you may wish to follow up next time with one of the following sessions:

- How to Be in the World and Not of It
- How to Listen to the News
- The Eternal Perspective

DEEPER STUDY

For those who would like to study further the themes raised in this session.

For Study

1. Read **Genesis 1:20-31**, which is the biblical creation story. God created all of life on earth and gave it to Adam to rule over. What does this tell you about God and His thoughts concerning climate change? Do you think God is worried about global warming? Why or why not?
2. Read **Genesis 6:11-21**: the narrative about the flood. God warned about the flood and then had Noah build an ark so people could escape the flood. Jesus said in **Matthew 24:37** that the time before His return would be like the days of Noah. Just like in the days of old, God has provided a way to escape the flood of judgment that is coming on the earth. What is this way of escape?

For Memorizing

1. **Matthew 24:6-8** (NIV): "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains."
2. **Matthew 24:37** (NIV): "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

For Observation

Look at [this review](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/15/the-climate-book-created-by-greta-thunberg-review-an-angry-call-for-action) of Greta Thunberg's [The Climate Book](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/15/the-climate-book-created-by-greta-thunberg-review-an-angry-call-for-action). You will notice that the review's author mentions "anger" concerning this book. Greta Thunberg is well-known as an activist for the climate, and she often responds out of fear and anger in her fight against governments and corporations. As a Christian who trusts God, how should we respond? How can we help others who are living in fear concerning the climate?

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/15/the-climate-book-created-by-greta-thunberg-review-an-angry-call-for-action>

For Action

Jesus is our climate superhero! When Jesus returns, He will regenerate all of creation and right all our wrongs. Find someone that you will share this message with in the coming week.

Before the Next IN:Tribe

Decide on one thing you will do to be a good steward of the environment and one thing you will do to reframe the global climate issue to align with God's plan for the earth. Come ready to share these at our next IN:Tribe meeting.

Examining the Crisis Icebreaker Note Cards

Interviewer

Welcome to our talk. We have two special guests: an esteemed and highly educated Environmental Scientist and Jesus, King of the Universe. Let's discuss our thoughts on these questions. I will ask each question and then give you each an opportunity to answer.

1. In your opinion, what is the most serious and urgent global crisis today?
2. What do you see as our role in the environment?
3. There have certainly been some recent unsettling changes in the climate, and I understand that both of you had predicted these changes. How long ago did you first start talking about these?
4. What do you believe is the cause of these climate changes?
5. In your opinion, will these climate changes improve or get worse?
6. What should we be doing to respond to the issue of climate change?

Environmental Scientist

1. The most serious and urgent global crisis is climate change, caused by global warming.
2. We must become educated about climate change to save the planet!
3. I have warned people about global warming and climate change for the past 35 years.
4. Human beings are the cause of climate change. We have been burning too many fossil fuels and creating greenhouse gases.
5. Global climate change is almost at the point of no return and will get worse if people worldwide don't rise up and do something to change their lifestyles.
6. Everyone should be changing their lifestyles to use less energy. They should eat less meat and dairy, eat more vegetables, walk or cycle to work, turn down their heating and cooling, and recycle more.

Christian Minister

1. Climate change is a problem. However, a far worse crisis is the number of people around the globe who do not know Jesus and are not preparing for His return.
2. God created humans to be stewards of the environment, take good care of it, and protect it. But their job is not to save the planet. That's Jesus' job!
3. Jesus spoke about these changes more than 1,900 years ago when He told His disciples about what would happen on the earth before His return.
4. Human beings have not been good stewards of the planet that God gave them.
5. Global climate changes will worsen as we get closer to Christ's return. These are signs of the times we are living in. You can read about this in the Bible.
6. It's good and right to take measures to reduce energy use and recycle. However, what is needed most right now is to prepare for Christ's return. Spend more time praying, reading the Bible, telling people about me, and learning about the signs of the times and what to do about them.



save the
planet

URGENT



sisasis

FOCUS ON THE ISSUE