



Let Creation Rejoice: Biblical Hope and Ecological Crisis
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"This is a book that speaks to a great need of our time, the need for hope that does not depend on illusion. It takes very seriously both science and exegesis. It has the potential to mobilize authentic Christian hope in fearful and perplexing times."

—Richard Bauckham, FBA, FRSE, professor emeritus, University of St Andrews

"Whatever your position on matters such as climate change, this book will prompt you to think through how your biblical hope intersects with the problems of the day."

—Russell D. Moore, president, Ethics & Religious Liberty

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A Perfect Storm, and Other Forecasts

The Bible is full of images of God caring for his creation in all its complexity. Yet experts warn us that "a so-called perfect storm of factors" threatens the future of life on earth. In Let Creation Rejoice, authors Moo and White assess the evidence for climate change and other threats that our planet faces in the coming decades while pointing to the hope God offers the world and the people he made.

The notion that a so-called perfect storm of factors are coming together in a way that threatens the future of life on earth is no longer the unique preserve of bearded prophets, street preachers and religious fundamentalists. John Beddington, the United Kingdom's chief scientist, provoked debate a few years ago when he suggested that we might begin witnessing the catastrophic effects of just such a perfect storm as soon as 2030. The accusations of scaremongering that ensued suggest that 2030 was perhaps just a little too close for comfort even for a public that has grown used to terrifying predictions about events fifty or a hundred years down the road. The natural history presenter David Attenborough recently admitted that, in his view, "the world is in terrible trouble. . . . Am I optimistic about the future? No, not at all. But that's irrelevant. It's imperative that you do something, even if you don't think it's going to do any good."

The surest sign of the popularity of apocalyptic rhetoric about the environment, however, is that even politicians occasionally get into the act. In the run-up to the Copenhagen Summit on climate change in late 2009, the UK's then prime minister, Gordon Brown, warned of the danger of impending "climate catastrophe." And of course former US vice president Al Gore's controversial film *An Inconvenient Truth* frightened plenty of people with its computer-generated images of rising sea levels inundating New York City (despite the fact that few scientists expect anything like that to happen for centuries), and unfortunately also further politicized what was already a deeply polarizing issue.

The film industry unsurprisingly has taken advantage of the cinematic potential of our fears about the future. A few movies explicitly reflect contemporary concerns about the environment or climate change (*The Day After Tomorrow*, 2004; *The Age of Stupid*, 2009), whereas many more invent their own apocalyptic scenarios (*Children of Men*, 2006; *I Am Legend*, 2007; *The Book of Eli*, 2010; *Melancholia*, 2011), or leave undetermined the causes of civilization's end (*The Road*, 2009, based on Cormac McCarthy's haunting novel of the same name). A recent National Geographic reality television show in the United States, *Doomsday Preppers*, reveals just how serious are some people's fears by featuring a variety of Americans preparing for disaster and the breakdown of civilization that they expect in the not-so-distant future. (Their preparations generally seem to involve growing their own produce and storing food, water and lots of guns and ammunition.) Meanwhile, in the more rarefied

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BOOK EXCERPT

Commission, SBC

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realm of philosophy, the popular Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek has written a book about our age appropriately titled *Living in the End Times*.

Sociologists can no doubt come up with their own explanations for the popularity of this recent talk of impending apocalypse; such language has been around for millennia, even if the causes of the predicted catastrophes have varied. What we are concerned with in this book, however, is first to assess the scientific data that provides the fuel upon which today's rhetoric burns. Do all of these dire predictions, as many pundits suggest, amount to nothing more than ideological scaremongering, perhaps hyped up for political or personal ends? Or are there good reasons for thinking that we may indeed be facing a crisis unprecedented in its scale and in the severity of its effects on life on earth?

We encourage readers to assess the evidence for themselves. We have tried to help by summarizing what seems to us to be the most relevant data in the following two chapters. As you will discover, our own assessment leads us to conclude that there is in fact plenty of cause for concern—and that is part of the reason why we have written this book. Climate change, we will suggest, is only the most publicized (and, admittedly, potentially the most far-reaching) threat that our planet faces in the coming decades. There is a wide range of much more obvious, interrelated and damaging effects that an ever-growing number of people consuming more and more are having on the planet on which we all depend.

— Taken from chapter one, “Apocalypse Now? Living in the Last Days”