

# Scriptural References for Environmental Stewardship

## From Virginia UMC Annual Conference

<http://www.vaumc.org/index.cfm/fa/content.view/menuID/3700.htm>

### A Biblical Foundation for Creation Care: Scriptures Categorized According to Themes

#### A. God Created It

- Genesis 1:1-2:3
- Job 38-41
- Mark 13:19
- Job 12:7-10
- Psalm 104
- Job 33:4
- Isaiah 40:26

#### B. God Loves It

- Genesis 9:8-17
  - 8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 9 "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you 10 and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."
  - 12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."
  - 17 So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."
- Psalm 136:1-9; 25-26
  - 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.  
His love endures forever.
  - 2 Give thanks to the God of gods.  
His love endures forever.
  - 3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:  
His love endures forever.
  - 4 to him who alone does great wonders,  
His love endures forever.

- 5 who by his understanding made the heavens,  
His love endures forever.
- 6 who spread out the earth upon the waters,  
His love endures forever.
- 7 who made the great lights—  
His love endures forever.
- 8 the sun to govern the day,  
His love endures forever.
- 9 the moon and stars to govern the night;  
His love endures forever.
- 25 and who gives food to every creature.  
His love endures forever.
- 26 Give thanks to the God of heaven.  
His love endures forever.
- John 3:16
  - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,<sup>[a]</sup> that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

### **C. God has an Ongoing Relationship with It**

- Numbers 22:22-39

### **D. God Owns It**

- Leviticus 25:23-24
  - The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land.
- Deuteronomy 10:14
  - To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.
- Psalms 24:1
  - The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
- Psalms 89:9-11
  - You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them. You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it.
- Psalms 95:4-5
  - In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

### **E. Creation has a Relationship with God/Creation Praises God**

- 1Chronicles 16:32-33
  - Let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them! Then the trees of the forest will sing, they will sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

- Psalms 19:1-4
  - The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
  - 2 Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they display knowledge.
  - 3 There is no speech or language  
where their voice is not heard. <sup>[a]</sup>
  - 4 Their voice <sup>[b]</sup> goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.  
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,
- Psalms 65:12-13
  - The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy,  
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves  
with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.
- Psalms 66:1-4
  - 1 Shout with joy to God, all the earth!
  - 2 Sing the glory of his name;  
make his praise glorious!
  - 3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!  
So great is your power  
that your enemies cringe before you.
  - 4 All the earth bows down to you;  
they sing praise to you,  
they sing praise to your name."  
Selah
- Psalms 96:11-13
  - 11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;  
let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
  - 12 let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.  
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;
  - 13 they will sing before the LORD, for he comes,  
he comes to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples in his truth.
- Psalms 98:7-9
  - Let the sea resound, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it.
  - 8 Let the rivers clap their hands,  
Let the mountains sing together for joy; 9 let them sing before the  
LORD,  
for he comes to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples with equity.
- Psalms 18:3-4, 7-13
- Psalms 150:6
  - Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.
- Isaiah 55:12-13
  - You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;

the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.

- 13 Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
which will not be destroyed."
- 1 Corinthians 10:26
  - 26for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."
- Revelation 5:13
  - Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth  
and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the  
throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever  
and ever!"

#### **F. A Relationship with Creation is Connected to a Relationship with God**

- Genesis 4:10-11
- 1 Kings 4:29-34
  - God gave Solomon very great wisdom, discernment, and breadth of understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt... He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He would speak of trees, from the cedar that is in the Lebanon to the hyssop that grows in the wall; he would speak of animals, and birds, and reptiles, and fish. People came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon...
- Ecclesiastes 3:18-22
  - I said in my heart with regard to human beings that God is testing them to show that they are but animals. For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity...
- Romans 1:20
  - 20For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

#### **G. Caring for Creation and Caring for the Poor are Interconnected**

- Exodus 23:10-11
- Leviticus 19:9-10
  - When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.
- Leviticus 25:1-17

## H. Human Obedience/Disobedience to God's Commandments has Consequences for Creation

- Deuteronomy 11:13-17
  - 13 So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul- 14 then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. 15 I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.
  - 16 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. 17 Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you.
- Deuteronomy 28:4,18
- Isaiah 24:1-3
  - 1 See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants-
  - 2 it will be the same for priest as for people, for master as for servant, for mistress as for maid, for seller as for buyer, for borrower as for lender, for debtor as for creditor.
  - 3 The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word.
- Isaiah 44:1-5
  - **Israel the Chosen**
  - 1 "But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen.
  - 2 This is what the LORD says— he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
  - 3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.
  - 4 They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams.
  - 5 One will say, 'I belong to the LORD ' ; another will call himself by the name of Jacob;

still another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,'  
and will take the name Israel.

- Hosea 4:1-3
  - **The Charge Against Israel**
  - 1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land:  
"There is no faithfulness, no love,  
no acknowledgment of God in the land.
  - 2 There is only cursing, <sup>[a]</sup> lying and murder,  
stealing and adultery;  
they break all bounds,  
and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
  - 3 Because of this the land mourns, <sup>[b]</sup>  
and all who live in it waste away;  
the beasts of the field and the birds of the air  
and the fish of the sea are dying.
- Micah 7:13
  - But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their doings.
- Zechariah 8:12
  - 12 "The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people.
  - Galatians 6:7-9
  - 7Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature <sup>[a]</sup> will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
- Revelation 11:18 (New International Version)

**18**The nations were angry; and your wrath has come.  
The time has come for judging the dead,  
and for rewarding your servants the prophets  
and your saints and those who reverence your name,  
both small and great—  
and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

## I. Jesus as Part of Creation

- John 1:1-10
  - 1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning.
  - 3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood <sup>[a]</sup> it.

- 6There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.<sup>[b]</sup>
- 10He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.
- **Footnotes:**
- [John 1:5](#) Or darkness, and the darkness has not overcome
- John 17:24
  - 24"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.
- Colossians 1:15-17
  - **The Supremacy of Christ**
  - 15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
- Hebrews 1:2
  - but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

## J. Jesus Prays in Deserted Places, Mountains, and Wilderness

- Mark 1:35
  - 35Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.
- Luke 5:16
  - 16But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.
- Luke 6:12
  - Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God.
- Luke 9:28
  - **The Transfiguration**
  - 28About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.
- Luke 22:39-41
  - **Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives**
  - 39Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,

## K. Jesus as Redeemer of Creation

- Mark 16:15

- 15He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.
- John 12:47
  - I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.
- Romans 8:18-23
  - **Future Glory**
  - 18I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21that<sup>[a]</sup> the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
  - 22We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
- Ephesians 1:10
  - 10to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.
- Colossians 1: 19-20
  - 19For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

## L. Future Vision of a New Creation

- Isaiah 11:1-16
  - 9 They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.
- Ezekiel 17:22-24
  - 22 " 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. 23 On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. 24 All the trees of the field will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.  
" 'I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.' "
- Ezekiel 36:33-36
  - 33 " 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. 34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. 35 They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins,



desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." 36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'

- 2 Corinthians 5:17-19
  - 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.
- Revelation 21:1-22:7

## M. Human Response: A Simple, Equitable Life for All

- Exodus 16
- Deuteronomy 2:7
  - 7 The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything.
- Nehemiah 9:20-21
  - 20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. 21 For forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.
- Proverbs 6:6-8
  - 6 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!
  - 7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler,
  - 8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.
- Ezekiel 34:11-31
  - 11 " 'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. 12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. 14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.
- Micah 4:1-4
- Matthew 6:25-34
  - **Do Not Worry**
  - 25"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your

heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?  
27Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life<sup>[a]</sup>?

- 28"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- Luke 12:6-28

- 6Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies<sup>[a]</sup>? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. 7Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.
- 8"I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. 9But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. 10And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.
- 11"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, 12for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."
- **The Parable of the Rich Fool**
- 13Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."
- 14Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" 15Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."
- 16And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. 17He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'
- 18"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." '
- 20"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'
- 21"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."
- **Do Not Worry**
- 22Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God

feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life<sup>[b]</sup>? 26Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

- 27"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!
- Acts 2:44-45
  - All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.
- Acts 4:32-35
  - **The Believers Share Their Possessions**
  - 32All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. 33With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. 34There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.