



## Longing for Eden

### A Biblical understanding of ecology and environmental stewardship.

Dr Craig Russell, (BSc Agric Hons, PhD)

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2ND - 8TH OCT 2018, SUNSHINE COAST, AUSTRALIA

### Ecclesiastes 3 : 19 - 20

For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. **All are from the dust, and to dust all return.**

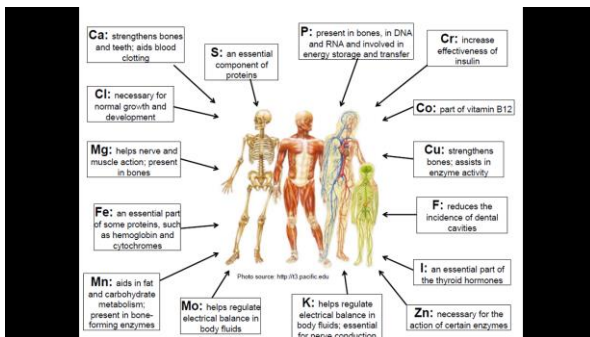
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### Nutrient cycling: "Bio-geo-chemistry"

#### Genesis 3:19

*"By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."* (ESV)

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A composite  
image of the  
world at  
night

Image Credit: NASA/NOAA [https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/earthday/gal\\_earth\\_night.html](https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/earthday/gal_earth_night.html)

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## Ecology defined

Eco - *oeco* (Latin), *oikos* (Greek) = House / Habitat  
(God's order for the house - a living house)

Branch of biology that seeks to understand relationships between organisms, and between them and their non-living surroundings.

Bio-diversity - species richness and abundance (1986).

Web of Life / Food Webs / Food Chains  
– trophic interactions, ie Who eats Who.

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## Father of modern taxonomy



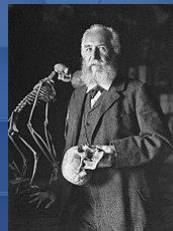
Carl Linnaeus  
(1707–1778)

Swedish Biologist  
Creationist

*Binomial names*

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## Father of modern ecology?



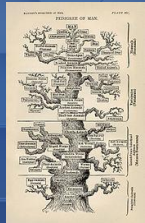
Ernst Haeckel  
(1834–1919)

German Biologist / Naturalist  
Evolutionist

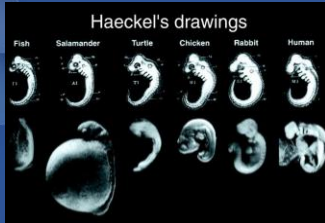
'Darwin's bulldog on the continent.'

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## Evolutionary assumptions



Haeckel's Tree of Life

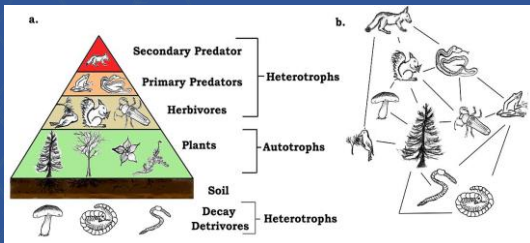


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## Ecology Basics – “Who eats Who”



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## A Biblical understanding of ecology

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### Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

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### Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

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**Genesis 1:28**

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

**Genesis 1:29**

And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."

**Genesis 1:30**

"... And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.



Eating out  
in Eden?



We live  
in a sin-  
cursed  
world!

**A Biblical understanding of ecology**

Kinds and Kingdoms – plants for food.

*Nephesh chayyāh* distinction – life v breath of life.

Dominion mandate – man as steward.

Death & Suffering - the corruption of creation.

A recent creation, flood catastrophe & ice age.



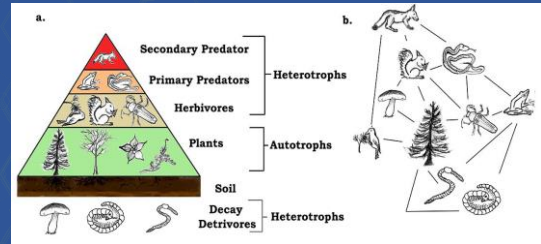


## Bio-geography & biomes

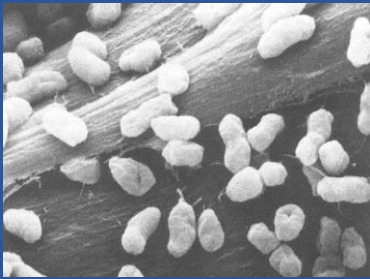


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## Ecology Basics – “Who eats Who”



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Bacteria  
living on  
the surface  
of roots

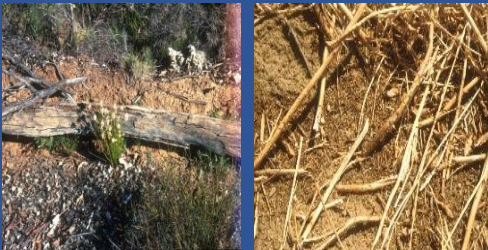
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Nutrient  
cycling  
  
an  
ecosystem  
service



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## Nutrient cycling—an ecosystem service



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Ecosystem Services

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## Ecosystem Services



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## Ecosystem Services



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## Ecosystem Services



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## Wetland & aquatic ecosystem services



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## Rapid ecosystem formation —Surtsey



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## Ecosystem resilience

### Mount St Helen's

Washington State, USA  
May 1980 Eruption



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## Ecological myths

1. Agriculture v Ecology—a false dichotomy.
2. Mankind—a rogue species?
3. Organic, clean & green—always best?
4. Dangerous climate change & carbon pollution? CO<sub>2</sub> is not carbon, is not soot.
5. Wilderness is good?

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## Wilderness as a Curse ?

### Isaiah 34 & Jeremiah 4

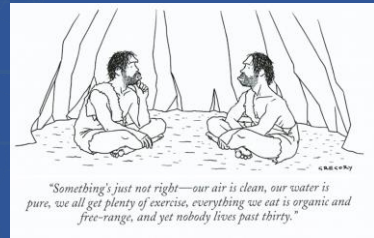
"What Isaiah and Jeremiah both described as the most catastrophic, devastating judgment on any people was God's de-creating their land—returning it to a state 'without form and void', making it a formless, empty wilderness under the dominion of the birds of the air and the beasts of the field instead of under the dominion of man. ...

**"Yet what Scripture consistently treats as a curse is the romantic dream of much of the environmental movement."**

"Where Garden meets Wilderness: Evangelical entry into the Environmental Debate." Calvin Beisner; Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation.

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## Deep Ecology



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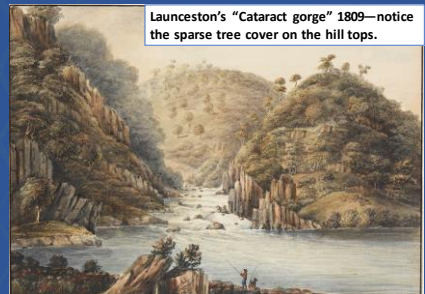
## Indigenous land management



Perth, Swan River  
Colony, March 1827

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## Indigenous land management



Launceston's "Cataract gorge" 1809—notice the sparse tree cover on the hill tops.

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Constitution Hill,  
Tasmania 1821



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## Biblically sound earth stewardship

Recognizes that 'Environmentalism' is

1. False religion
2. Anti-human, 'Pro-death' agenda.
3. Targets Christian youth with deception.
4. Harms poor people.
5. Must be countered with genuine stewardship that includes care for the poor and vulnerable.

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Patrick Moore  
(Scientist, Greenpeace)



"The environmental movement has evolved into the strongest force there is to prevent development in the developing countries. It's no longer the environmental movement, it's a political activist movement."

**Want to better the environment?**

Forgo some treats each month and help a child escape poverty!

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## Romans 1 : 21-23

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

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