Managing the Life on this Planet From the Ground Up

Summary

Was “dominion” over the earth ever meant as a license to exploit it? This article opens a three-part study arguing it was always meant as stewardship — and traces what happens when that stewardship is abandoned.

- Genesis’ Creation account read as giving mankind “dominion” as a stewardship responsibility — to “dress and keep” the earth — not a license to exploit it.
- Both the theory of evolution and modern industrial farming practices traced to the same underlying “self-centeredness.”
- The environmental and public-health costs of chemical-based agriculture, food processing, and distribution surveyed as evidence of a corrupted system.
- Farming itself framed as a spiritually instructive discipline, building awareness of, dependence on, and obedience to the Creator.
- (Continued directly in Articles 69 and 70.)

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To help us avoid being further deluded by Satan's temptations of SELF-CENTEREDNESS, Isaiah reminds us: "But now, O Yahweh, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" *(64:8)*.

Try to see ourselves and our planet as Yahweh does. Imagine looking down from outer space, seeing nearly 6 billion little human creatures orbiting on this tiny "ping-pong ball", spinning like a gyro at over 1,000 miles per hour, circling a giant ball of fire at precisely one revolution per year.

The sun - our energy source, keeps us warm and produces our food. Yet unlike man's efforts, there is no "energy crisis" in this relationship. If there were, it would be fatal to all life forms! If this little sphere of ours, wandered ever-so-slightly off course, we would either be frozen to death, or fried to a crisp by the sun's white-hot inferno of flames that leap out hundreds of thousands of miles in every direction!

Further out into space, our planet would appear as no more than a pin-point of reflected light in the heavens. Have we ever asked ourselves what causes these countless billions of celestial bodies to stay in place relative to each other and to the rest of the universe? Is it likely that such astronomic precision continues to function smoothly of its own accord? These are interesting and challenging questions to those with an open mind.

Where did planet earth come from? Is it just a coincidence that it exists, and another, that it perfectly matches and supplies the needs of every living species? The oddest phenomenon of all - life; in multiple forms, some plant, some animal, all living together under the daytime energy of just one distant ball of fire!

It is truly amazing that all life exists, reproduces and dies - without any input from man! Yet myriads of life forms do exist, or rather, co-exist - live, grow, reproduce, die and decompose to perpetuate the cycle. All in one miraculously conceived and fantastically complex symbiotic relationship! Literally hundreds of thousands of mutually INTER-DEPENDENT, mutually beneficial life forms exist. There is NO WAY these life forms could have survived, had their original existence or their respective development been delayed for days or weeks, let alone millions of years!

These marvels are beyond man's comprehension, yet millions never even raise their heads to question them, or their own unprovable "theory" of evolution, or to ponder the magnificence of our planet, the infinity of the universe, or the wonder of how it all continues to function without man - and to a considerable extent, in spite of man!

This vast delicate balance is something over which puny little man has absolutely NO control whatsoever - which is just as well, judging by our performance in other areas! But by a combination of intellectual arrogance, ignorance, and REBELLION THROUGH DECEIT *(of Satan),* man has formulated the crazy belief that all of the orderliness and precision of the planets, the galaxies - the universe and its very existence "just happened"!

To support the anti-God theory of evolution, one must first ignore Darwin's recanting of his own theory, plus overlook the fact that "scientific evolutionists" themselves, toss figures around that vary by tens of millions of years! So much for their ridicule of Creation, and their claim to be scientific! Their "theory" *(which they admit is not provable - but that we should merely "accept it")* is full of holes, and to believe it is an act of UNPARALLELED BLIND FAITH!

This is the ultimate insult to the Potter from the clay! But then clay is not all that intelligent! *(And obviously, very easily deceived!)* And we are, in our present form, nothing more than "clay", "formed...of the dust of the ground" *(Gen. 2:7)!*

Notice Isaiah's dramatic contrast between Yahweh and man: "To whom then will ye liken Yahweh...It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ...Behold, the nations are as a drop in the bucket, and counted as the small DUST of the balance...All nations before Him are as nothing" *(40:18,22;15,17).*

This is true, but Yahweh is still very mindful of man, whom He made in His own image and for a very special purpose! As part of His plan, He tells us, "The heaven, even the heavens, are Yahweh's: but the earth hath He given to the children of men" *(Ps. 115:16)*.

But in his rebellion, man refuses to believe this, and does not want to be responsible to anyone but himself!

As viewed from space, man and every "little" thing that he has created, are as nothing when compared to the celestial wonders, the earthly clouds, the snow, the rain, the mountains, animals, forests and farmlands GIVEN to us by Yahweh!

Yahweh also GAVE us dominion over every living thing on this planet! With instructions on how to manage it! In his ignorance, carnal-minded man has rebelled against every Word of Yahweh! And what has this rebellion produced? How about starting with millions of acres of man-made deserts, smog-laden cities, towns, traffic jams; air, water and soil pollution; crime, violence, sickness, disease and war, not to mention millions of starving people every year, or thousands of extinct animal and plant species!

Do we believe Yahweh, when He says: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death", or that man is, "ever learning [his own wisdom], and never able to come to the truth *[of Yahweh's wisdom]" (Prov. 14:12;16:25; 2 Tim. 3:7).* Science fulfills these proverbs. It has systematically ridiculed and resisted the existence of Yahweh and His role as Designer, Creator and Sustainer of the creation - the

universe. It has therefore placed human intelligence ahead of what Yahweh teaches, based on its own experimentation. It usually looks good, but being based on human reasoning, will invariably come unstuck, as it fails to take Yahweh's REVEALED KNOWLEDGE into consideration.

THIS IS THE CAUSE OF ALL OF OUR CURRENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS! Let's look at this from the perspective of modern farming practices, as an example. Albeit farming represents a simple industry, it nonetheless plays vital economic and provisional roles for everyone in our society. And as I personally have a background in farming, it makes the many points of interest easier for me to relate.

Each of us has been born into this complex living environment. We had no choice. At the same time, we do have a Yahweh-given responsibility to manage it. We were given "dominion" over it, with instructions to "dress it and to keep it" *(Gen. 2:15)*. This is for our own benefit, and more importantly, for the ultimate good of future generations.

This is where the SELF-CENTEREDNESS of Satan's influence has come into play. Does mankind really care about future generations, or just his own survival? A general analysis of the demands we regularly make on the environment should answer the question! We are the most materialistic, greed-filled generation in human history. And ironically, through scientific and technological "progress", we have developed the greatest all-time capacity for destruction - of anything and everything!

Scientists and the vested interests that bankroll their experimentation, justify their agro-chemical based system by claiming they successfully feed much of mankind. The industry does feed much of the world, but that does not mean they are doing it "successfully". Are scientists loving their neighbour when they are helping to destroy the environment, genetically manipulating plants and animals and harming our own health?

As a farmer, are we loving our neighbour, if we grow food simply out of motivation for money - regardless of nutritional value? What if we operate a tractor mounted boom sprayer, polluting the food crops we grow with chemicals so poisonous that we ourselves wear protective "spacesuits"? What if we feed our livestock great varieties of toxic growth hormones, antibiotics and other chemicals?

As a food processor, are we loving our neighbour, if we refine the nutrients out of otherwise healthy, nutritional foodstuffs? How about when we chemically treat it with unwanted and unwarranted preservatives for so-called extra shelf-life, or if we chemically alter the food with all kinds of deadly, flavour enhancing additives and carcinogenic coloring and modifying agents?

As a food distributor, are we loving our neighbour when we promote or sell nutritionless food that has been contaminated with doubtful chemical residues and/or deliberately adulterated with chemical enhancing agents known to be harmful?

As a consumer, are we loving our neighbour, or our family, or our guests, when for the sake of saving a few dollars, we knowingly purchase and serve this tasteless, intensively advertised, unnecessarily refined, overly

processed, chemically treated, factory manufactured “food”?

Are we loving our neighbour, if we are involved in the highly profitable area of research into finding the “ever-newer and better” methods to grow crops, or raise livestock, or to manufacture harmful agro-chemicals or food additives?

Are we loving our neighbour, if we are involved at any level in the gigantic medical, veterinary, pharmaceutical, or agro-chemical industries, that perpetuate their very own existence by treating symptoms and effects, rather than the causes of problems - even if, and when this is known to produce far worse problems?

Are we loving our neighbour, if we are investing in shares, or work for any company, bank or financial institution that lends to, or promotes any level of these activities?

The point behind all of these examples is not to condemn everyone, but to demonstrate that everyone, either directly or indirectly, is involved in this system. We all play our part whether we like it or not. Certain things we can avoid, but we cannot deny that the entire system, from the top to the bottom, has been corrupted by Satan! It is full of greed and selfish motives, with little if any, genuine concern for the health and welfare of others.

Modern agriculture has historically proven to be the single greatest negative factor on damage to the earth’s environment, mostly within the last 40 or so years. In this century we have seen the development and expansion of giant agro-chemical/food distribution companies around the world. Their phenomenal growth and huge amounts of investment capital have resulted in their effective monopolizing of mankind’s food supply, and its production methodology.

These companies control seed and livestock breeding programs, together with chemical pesticide and feed supplements, that are all intricately and inseparably linked, in a fashion that allows them to create and capitalize on a totally artificial supply/demand feature. This in itself, should almost be sufficient warning! We must begin to realize that it is WRONG for ANY company to totally control access to whole seed varieties, and then sell them only to farmers willing to utilize that same company’s system of chemical fertilizers and pesticide controls! This happens in most every facet of our modern farming arena!

Our food producers - our farmers and their families, have been driven from their land and way of life on a scale never previously thought possible! Modern farming has proven to be a “treadmill” where one has to run faster and faster to maintain an even position. Millions who could not stand the pace, lost their farms and their way of life. The few that remain, have completely lost control of their own industry and their financial independence. They have become bondservants to the various agri-business corporations and money lenders, owing total dependence on suppliers of hybrid seed and breeding stock; on manufacturers of fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, pesticides, heavy equipment, pharmaceutical and other supplies.

Such dramatic social and environmental upheaval has not occurred since the Industrial Revolution! What man did not foresee in this "industrialization" of farming, was the impact on our soil, plant and animal species, forests, rivers, oceans, underground water sources, the atmosphere, our physical health and our social well-being. Even city-dwelling consumers, who at first welcomed the "cheap" food, have recognized its futility, when compared to our recent spiralling health care problems and related costs.

Some might argue that we actually "need" certain aspects of these so-called modern farming practices, but this comes only from the minds of those that desire to perpetuate this myth for their own selfish greed and/or the need to bolster their own self-inflated "scientific" ego. It is absolutely not based on any credible facts, and as we will see later, is very easily disproved.

Yahweh says through the apostle John, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth...I have no greater joy than to hear My children walk in truth" *(3 John 2,4).*

Yahweh's wishes, and His warnings have been habitually ignored: "Trust in Yahweh with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes" *(Prov. 3:5-7).*

In exercising his "dominion" over this planet, man has never consistently followed Yahweh's simple instructions on how to "dress it and to keep it". When Yahweh gave these simple instructions, the earth was an example of a perfect environment with great potential for development. We were to "keep" it, which means, to guard, protect or to preserve it. Instead, we have robbed, plundered, exploited and fought to try and conquer it!

Most people have little, if any real idea, why it is so important that we "dress and keep" our environment. It goes far beyond the simple aspect of sustenance.

Why has so much of man's activity been centered around farming; around animals, crops, gardens, orchards, fishing and so on? Why a support system with all these food sources totally dependent on water, healthy soil, sunshine and a symbiotic relationship with insects, earthworms, and micro-organic life? Why not something simpler?

Consider bread, long regarded as a staple of life. Its production and use, involves soil tillage, seed planting, weeding, a year's delay between harvests, threshing, cleaning, storage, milling, marketing, kneading, baking, packaging, distribution, retailing and finally, eating! As all things are possible with Yahweh, surely a continuously bearing "bread" tree would be simpler and much more efficient! Come to think of it, Yahweh could have pre-fuelled us for life - sort of like a nuclear reactor!

Careful analysis of Yahweh's plan for man and His system of food production REVEALS several major reasons for its design, aside from sustenance. These reasons all tie in with building a righteous, holy, perfect character within ourselves.

The first, and most obvious, is to create in man, the AWARENESS of a Creator God! "For the invisible things of Him [Yahweh] FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD ARE CLEARLY SEEN, being understood by the things that are made" *(Rom. 1:20).* Though man shows little consciousness of it, everything in the creation around us reflects the incomparable mind of Yahweh! Its fathomless complexity on the one hand and its dumbfounding simplicity on the other, make this planet an ecological masterpiece. It should impress on every human, the glory, power and majesty of Yahweh.

Secondly, is to create in man, an awareness of our DEPENDENCE on Yahweh and the environment! The necessity of maintaining the environment by which all life is sustained is meant to help us understand and appreciate our dependence on it and on Yahweh. Man needs a constant reminder of who really is in charge of things! Complete dependence on Yahweh and His laws has always been the key to joy, harmony and the abundant life Yahweh wants for all of us.

Thirdly, is to provide evidence of this most grand Creator, that would instill in man an inherent appreciation of the "laws of nature", and desire to be OBEDIENT to their Creator! Obedience is the key to receiving every blessing promised by Yahweh. Our natural desire to receive these blessings is bolstered by our witness to the evidence of Yahweh's laws of nature, and to Yahweh Himself.

Fourthly, is to provide OPPORTUNITIES for teaching, learning, sharing and growing in relationships with friends and families. "Farming", was originally given to us as Yahweh's most honoured profession. It is a means of occupation, requiring vast amounts of time and cooperation by families and entire communities. It was essential, and thereby could not be ignored.

The systematic production of food, maintains our AWARENESS of the source of our food, requiring a fundamental understanding of the very creation itself, which in turn, reminds us of our DEPENDENCE on the Creator, leading us to OBEDIENCE to the laws of creation, which we understand will provide us OPPORTUNITIES, leading again to AWARENESS, and so on.

A fifth, and somewhat more subtle, but no less significant reason why Yahweh made our system of food production the way He did, is to humble us before our Creator. Yahweh knew, that we, like Satan, would be seduced by SELF-CENTEREDNESS and over-inflated egos. He knew that we would desire to do it "our way". He therefore made it so utterly impossible to improve upon His system, that we would humbly accept "His way", as being the only way! Unfortunately, many are still out there "banging their heads on the wall", and still have not - and may never in this lifetime, "get it"!

It is after all, most humbling, when you realize that in order to best our Creator, we would literally have to make and sustain life out of dust! "And the Lord Yahweh formed man out of the dust of the ground...and out of the ground...formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air" *(Gen. 2:7,19)*.

Elsewhere we read that, "All flesh is grass" *(Isaiah 40:6)*. For the purpose of better understanding our Yahweh-given environment, we also need to know that all grass is SOIL! "Grass" is therefore Yahweh's

fundamental link between man and the "dust of the ground". And we will go on now, to explain just how important the farming *(dressing and keeping)* of this "dust" is!

When Satan tempted Adam and Eve to rebel, they were expelled from the garden of Eden, thereby deprived of the fantastic opportunity of living and working with the laws that create and maintain a perfect environment, with its perfect productivity. Yahweh's curse was to eject them into a hostile environment that would physically plague them with problems for life *(Gen. 3:17-19)!*

They also produced the first murderer. But even before killing his own brother, their son Cain openly rebelled against Yahweh! It involved the type of offerings he made to Yahweh. Yahweh's rejection of Cain's offerings lies in the absence of animals!

Cain could not accept Yahweh's rejection of his offering, so he "got back", so to speak, by striking a death-blow to his blessed brother. He was then cursed by Yahweh: *(Gen. 4:12,13).* The kind of curse was no mere coincidence! As well as being a curse for murder, it underscored Yahweh's rejection of his offering.

We must realize it is highly significant that his curse and that of his parents, both related directly to PRODUCTIVITY OF SOIL! An offering of fruit, instead of the flock, was man's second act of rebellion, and has set the pattern until this day. By requiring animal sacrifices, Yahweh forced any OBEDIENT man to maintain an animal breeding program! *(Physical offerings are now obsolete under the New Covenant.)*

It is not just that Yahweh has designated certain animals as fit for human consumption *(see Leviticus 11:1-47)*, and others unfit. It is that there are some astonishing fundamental links regarding the healthy maintenance of plants, animals, the soil, and man, within a system of food production that includes animal husbandry, versus one that does not.

This is a classic example of Yahweh not spelling out the consequences of wrong behaviour. Like children, we sometimes have to discover these penalties for ourselves. All we have to do is OBEY - the blessings will follow! We are Yahweh's children; and as with our own little children, we don't always feel compelled to spell out all the consequences for disobedience. Sometimes we just say "obey"! If they don't, they find there are penalties.

We do not yet, even begin to understand the intricacies involved in the delicate balance of nature. We do know that many plant and animal species, as well as soil fertility, and air and water quality, are all somehow inter-dependent. The imbalanced use of soil fertility, crop or animal production, is like a transfer of past capital and of future possibilities to enrich a dishonest present. It is theft!

We do know, that following modern mono-culture farming practices, requiring by their very nature, the use of excessive amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, often resulting in serious soil loss due to erosion, is WRONG!

Just as WRONG as genetically altering plants and animal species! These activities are precisely what our modern agri-business industry is all about!

We should also know that the indiscriminate harvesting of many types of "unclean" shellfish and other seafood, is inextricably linked to the "balance of nature" within our water systems, and is WRONG!

We should also know, that wasting vast amounts of wholesome grain, otherwise fit for consumption by untold tens of millions of undernourished and starving humans, on feeding swine is WRONG!

So is the wasteful feeding of all other types of animals Yahweh has told us are "unclean", WRONG!

Yahweh did not explain the reasons "why" for all of the points contained in His instructions, nor for example did He say "why" swine are unclean. In many cases, the explanations are still well beyond our comprehension. We were told simply to OBEY!

With regard to swine for example, science has finally "proven" the reason it is deemed "unclean"! In writing "*Study of Blood in Cancer", O.C. Gruner,* a renowned cancer researcher, stated: "a meal which features pork will produce a microscopic blood picture *[of cancer micro-organisms]* indistinguishable from that of a cancer patient, though of course, normality appears to reappear after eight or nine hours". Seems to be a pretty clear cut reason for staying away from pork!

The Messiah said: "If anyone will DO HIS WILL, he shall KNOW of the doctrine, whether it is of Yahweh" *(John 7:17)*. Yes, if we follow all of Yahweh's instructions, even our own common-sense tells us, that all of our problems would be solved! Certainly, THEN, we would KNOW that the instructions *(doctrine)* are from Yahweh! We may not always know WHY, but if we know its right, does "why" really matter?

The book of Genesis is a beautiful illustration of the love of Yahweh. Several thousand years ago, in their "childlike" appreciation for the story, our ancient forefathers found it EASY TO UNDERSTAND! That's why Moses chose to write it this way - simple! Yet somehow, with all of our "advanced" education and "progress", most of modern man just can't "get it"!

The symbology of the Garden of Eden story is still just as EASY to understand as it ever was - any child can quickly grasp its meaning! It seems that it is time for "adults" to put off their arrogant "know-it-all" attitudes, and re-read this simple story.

"Put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt...and be RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND" *(Ephesians 4:17-24).*

Yahweh placed us in a perfect environment - the earth, with perfect, simple instructions on how to "dress and to keep it [perfect]"! And He GAVE us our own FREE WILL. In other words, if we chose to "DO HIS WILL" - to be OBEDIENT, following HIS instructions on how to "keep" the earth, it would remain a perfect environment, and our DEPENDENCE on it would be perfectly fulfilled.

Conversely, if we chose to be DISOBEDIENT, and manage the earth "our way", it would AGAIN become an imperfect environment, and our dependence on it could never be totally fulfilled, and we would be plagued with physical problems for life *(Gen. 3:17-19)!*

Yahweh desired us to follow His "farming" instructions for obvious reasons. As food was/is vital to life, it cannot be ignored, and its production was (and should still be) our primary occupation! Farming is loaded with OPPORTUNITIES, from learning to work together, to sharing with one another, to learning to accept our limited understanding and total DEPENDENCE on the creation, which reminds us of the Creator, which reminds us to be OBEDIENT to His laws, in order to be blessed with the OPPORTUNITIES, and so on!

Satan has his own selfish reasons why he wants us to continue to ridicule and resist REVEALED KNOWLEDGE! Satan does not care how many, or which of Yahweh's laws we break, so long as we do not totally submit to the government of Yahweh! Through SELF-CENTEREDNESS, Satan has deceived us into believing that "we", actually know better than Yahweh! In this, our societies have universally obeyed Satan, almost without fail!

Yahweh says "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...Because you [the dust of the ground] have forgotten the law of your God" *(Hosea 4:6).* Our ancestors obviously made some wrong choices, which we, unfortunately, stubbornly continue to make!

Yahweh's laws have long been ridiculed by many as "outdated". His environmentally sound management principles have been resisted to the point of nearly bringing this planet to extinction.

THE SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS REVEALED IN GOD'S LAWS AND INSTRUCTIONS WERE FREELY GIVEN TO US - FOR OUR BENEFIT!

Yahweh FREELY GAVE us instructions on WHAT foods to produce domestically, HOW to produce them, and WHICH foods were "clean" and safe to be eaten, and which were "unclean" - to be left in the wild. *(See parts of Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Leviticus and specifically Deut. 14 and Lev. 11 for details.)*

These laws and instructions are just one more simple example of how Yahweh's Word is TIMELESS! It applies today, just as it would have thousands of years ago, and just as it will thousands of years from now! We cannot change any of Yahweh's laws, any more than we can change HIS Law of Gravity!

Yahweh's Word can be applied to every occupation, not just farming. Read your Bible with a determination to apply Yahweh's timeless instructions to your lifestyle - without getting all caught up in "why" each of these instructions are meant to apply.

We may eventually understand all of the reasons "why", but for now, DOING GOD'S WILL, will simply prove to be the most rewarding experience any of us could HOPE for!

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