Global Warming:
America's New Stance

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."
—Psalm 2:4

IN THIS PSALM, THE AUTHOR points forward to a time when irreligious heathen men would gather themselves together to consider their affairs on the strength of their own selfish and proud interests, instead of seeking first the counsel and direction of our all-wise and loving Heavenly Father. The Lord will 'laugh' and they will be seen by him as being in a state of 'derision.' In his Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, Dr. William Gesenius defines the term 'derision' [#3932] as meaning (a) to stammer barbarously in a foreign tongue, and (b) as objects of ridicule and scorn.

THE PSALMIST'S WORDS

The psalmist asks, "Why do the heathen rage [tumultuously assemble, *Marginal Translation*], and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall

have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."—Ps. 2:1-5

SEEKING SOLUTIONS

While contemplating the message contained in our featured scripture text, we recall a major international news event that was being reported during the final weeks of the past year. Worldwide news media began submitting accounts of the events taking place at the United Nations Climate Change Conference that was being held at Bali, Indonesia from December 3-14, 2007. At the conference, representatives from more than 180 nations around the globe were meeting to discuss and take active measures in connection with the subject of global warming. They were to study the effects of global warming and climatic changes that have become a divisive issue among many nations in our modern-day world. The delegates were hoping to effectively address the problems and consider solutions.

After several days of meetings, a breakthrough of sorts had finally been achieved at the conference by the direct intervention of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yodhoyono and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to encourage delegates to complete what seemed to be a series of hopelessly deadlocked talks concerning the matters at hand. Yodhoyono told the delegates that although meaningful decisions were difficult to agree upon, he pointed out that the human race and planet earth cannot be allowed to crumble because we cannot find the right words to address

the situation. The Secretary-General said that he was disappointed in the progress that had been made, that the hour is late and that it was now time to make whatever recommendations were necessary.

DIFFICULT DECISIONS

After numerous false starts and false hopes, miscommunications and misunderstandings, many of the delegates finally agreed on a road map that would launch negotiations toward a global, comprehensive agreement to address the effects of global warming and climate change. The Bali conference set an agenda that frames future discussions that are designed to take place over the next two years, and promises to set a deadline for the year 2009 to complete the negotiations. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a statement in which he said that the Bali road map is only a pivotal first step toward an agreement that may possibly address the threat of these vital issues. He emphasized the seriousness of their meeting together and that this was a major defining challenge of our time.

The discussions called on developing nations to take immediate and decisive action to address the effects of global warming and climate changes in a measurable, reportable, and verifiable manner. Representatives pointed out that developing nations, such as China and India, as well as developed countries like the United States, must face a new level of accountability and pressure to reduce one of the major problems concerning the level of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

DAMAGING EMISSIONS

One of the prime developers of problem emissions technology today is Carbon Sciences Incorporated of Santa Barbara, California. They are developing innovative technology that promises to eliminate earth-destroying carbon dioxide (CO2) from human-created sources and transform it into environmentally friendly carbon products. These products include building materials such as paper, plastics, fertilizer and other industrial applications. Derek McLeish, the company's CEO, addressed the problem of global warming and said that current solutions for dealing with CO2 emissions from primary sources such as power plants and industrial factories are based on capturing CO2 gases and then burying them underground or on the ocean floor. He pointed out that this was a very dangerous and shortsighted solution, and that, if not dealt with effectively, it would leave a ticking time bomb for future generations to deal with.

Carbon Sciences Inc. plans to unveil a mobile prototype in January, 2008. This will be installed in a lab truck that can be driven on tour to support the company's awareness and business development initiatives. The prototype will be operational and provide for the mixing of abundantly available rock materials with CO2 and transform them into a stable carbonate powder. The powder can then be pressed into pieces of writing chalk, thereby completing the process of making a very useful product that can be used in a school classroom.

In addition to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that are being studied in relation to global warming and climate change, there are also five others

that are currently being investigated. These are methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulphur hexafluoride (SF6).

DRAWING UP A PROPOSAL

The international representatives at the Bali conference acknowledged that damaging emissions were of vital and immediate concern affecting all nations. However, the process of wording the proposal and clarifying it proved to be difficult and time-consuming. The representative from India spoke on behalf of all of the developing nations and said that alternate wording of the proposal had finally been achieved and agreed upon. The spokesman from Bangladesh then reported that certain language concerning the least developed nations and small island states had also been changed or eliminated, and the delegate from the Philippine Islands spoke concerning the phrase "on the basis of equity" and explained that it, too, had been discussed and changes were made. Many other concerns in drawing up the proposal were also addressed.

When it came time for the representative from the United States delegation to speak, Paula Dobriansky, Undersecretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, said that the United States could not accept the formulation that had been put forward. She did say, however, that her country would keep working on the proposals until a possible agreement could be found. In response to the spokesperson's statement, the representative from South Africa then reiterated the fact that developing countries had already voluntarily moved to accept

new obligations concerning their actions on climate change and global warming. He emphasized too that they have done this in a measurable, reportable, and verifiable manner, a concession that only a year ago would have been unthinkable. The South African representative asked the United States to reconsider its position on the agreement. In support of this request, many other developing nations also began to ask the United States delegation to state their reservations separately, and to not block a consensus that was forthcoming from all the other states that were represented at the conference. The delegate from the developing country of Papua New Guinea also challenged the United States to "either lead, follow, or get out of the way."

Soon after this verbal exchange it appeared that the conference was on the brink of collapse and Paula Dobriansky again took the floor to say that the United States was in favor of a road map and also wanted to be a part of it. She said that her country was also committed to a long-term greenhouse emissions reduction program, and that they would work with other large emitters to reduce global emissions by 50% by the year 2050. She then said that they would move forward with the proposed agreement and join the consensus that the other nations had adopted.

DRAMATIC REVERSAL

This proved to be a dramatic reversal concerning United States policy in connection with the entire subject of climate change and global warming and its disastrous effects on the human race and our planet earth. Man has long ignored the issue and

the need to protect our environment. After accepting the agreement many countries thanked the United States for joining the consensus.

For the first time in the history of climate change and global warming discussions over the past number of years, the United States had come to the table to negotiate a viable solution. Paula Dobriansky, leader of the American delegation, called the historic Bali accord a new chapter in climate change diplomacy, and emphasized that the United States is very committed to developing a satisfactory and long-term greenhouse gas reduction emission program to reach that goal.

THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

Serious efforts to address the growing evidence of global warming and climate change may be noted especially since 1992. At that time, the so-called "Earth Summit" took place under the international environmental treaty produced at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The treaty's aim was to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas in an effort to combat global warming. There were no legal bindings attached to the agreement, but 154 nations voluntarily signed the treaty to reduce atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and stabilize to 1990 levels by the year 2000. The United States was a signatory to the treaty.

After years of intense and serious international negotiations, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change met at Kyoto, Japan in December, 1997 to establish mandatory emission limits. Nations that had ratified the agreement

were thus committed to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases, and the United States was required to reduce its emissions by 7%. During the next several years, nearly all of the original signatories of the Earth Summit conference had ratified the agreement.

When the Bali conference took place in December, 2007 there were 174 nations committed to the agreement, with the United States as the only industrialized nation and Kazakhstan one of the developing nations, being the two signatory nations to the original Earth Summit to have not ratified the agreement. Neither the Clinton nor Bush administrations sent the protocol to the United States Congress for ratification. President Bush stated that it would be too damaging to the United States economy to ratify, and that it did not address major concerns regarding China and India as developing nations.

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

On January 24, 2006, former United States Vice President Al Gore released a movie that he had been preparing entitled "An Inconvenient Truth." This documented his efforts to raise an alarm on the serious issues of global warming. As a student of climate change and its effects for the past 30 years, Gore wanted to counterbalance some of the misinformation and misunderstanding that had become prevalent in connection with the climate crisis in our world today. The movie presented the latest evidence to demonstrate how the accumulation of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other pollutants of the industrial age are increasing temperatures worldwide.

The movie emphasized the fact that global warming may lead to greatly increased sea levels in the foreseeable future that could inundate major cities such as New York and others that are located along coastal areas. It could produce spasms of extreme weather resulting in larger and more devastating hurricanes and typhoons, global pandemics, and depending on the location, torrential rains or decades-long drought. Changes are now being seen in all areas of the world. Northern polar ice is rapidly shrinking, and virtually all of our mountain glaciers are now melting. The massive ice mound on Greenland is becoming destabilized and the equally enormous masses of ice on islands in the Western Antarctic are also melting.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Al Gore in Oslo, Norway on December 10, 2007 for his strong commitment to arouse awareness of the effects of global warming. His efforts have been reflected throughout a period of many years including his political activity, lectures, books, and especially for his award-winning film "An Inconvenient Truth." He has also worked in connection with the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The Nobel citation proclaimed that Al Gore, former Vice President of the United States, is the single individual who has done the most to create greater worldwide understanding of the measures that need to be adopted. However, he has been criticized by some who question the accuracy of some of his predictions.

A LASTING SOLUTION

Students of the Bible recognize the efforts of fallen man as he struggles to cope and to find possible solutions to some of the changing weather patterns and effects of global warming in our chaotic and turbulent world of today. They thus turn to the wonderful promises of God and look forward with great anticipation to the soon-to-be established kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that will provide the only lasting and righteous solutions.

THE PSALMIST DAVID

Turning to one of the psalms of David, we read, "By awesome deeds Thou dost answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation. Thou who art the trust of all the ends of the earth and the farthest sea; Who dost establish the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might; Who dost still the roaring of the seas, The roaring of the waves, And the tumult of the peoples. And they who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Thy signs; Thou dost make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy."—Ps. 65:5-8, *New American Standard Bible*

THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

The Prophet Ezekiel, writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit of our loving and eternal Heavenly Father, spoke concerning the restoration of the children of Israel. However, in a grander and broader sense, he portrayed the wonderful time of blessing that is in store for the whole human family that will be made available to them during the future kingdom of our Lord and the faithful members of his bride. He wrote, "Thus saith the Lord

GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it."—Ezek. 36:33-36

OUR FEATURED TEXT

We also note the words of hope and inspiration that are further recorded in the message of our featured psalm. Having previously seen that the kings and rulers of earth have sought their selfish counsel against the mighty hand of God and his anointed Son, we noted that he [God] will "have them in derision." (Ps. 2:2-4) However, God's ultimate purpose concerning the future blessings that are to be poured out upon his human creation and the perfecting of the earth's physical environment will be manifest under the administration of his beloved Son's kingdom that will provide life and peace for all who will obey the Heavenly Father's righteous laws of truth and righteousness.

In the second psalm, we turn again to read, "Yet have I set [anointed, *Marginal Translation*] my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,

and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy posses-sion. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's ves-sel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth."—vss. 6-10

THE COMING KINGDOM

We have considered briefly some of the wonderful promises of God that have been recorded for our understanding and blessing, and realize that the world now stands on the very threshold of Christ's future kingdom of peace. Under the estab-lishment of that righteous rule, all mankind will be given opportunity to be lifted up from the miry pit of sin and death, and obtain everlasting life here on a perfected earth.

Man will no longer have to confront the issues of global warming and the scenes of turbulence that now must be accepted as a part of our everyday life. During Christ's kingdom, earth's physical en-vironment, together with the violent storms and climatic changes that mark our time, will inevita-bly give way under the powerful hand of our loving and eternal Father whose ultimate purpose is to bless his earthly creation. Let us faithfully contin-ue to announce the glad tidings of that blessed time that is ever drawing near, and praise our Father for his promised everlasting welfare. ■