

A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift

by
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Vanishing Glaciers: An Evening with James Balog

I recently had the opportunity to attend a presentation by James Balog, the internationally acclaimed photographer, author, movie producer and environmental researcher. His greatest interest in the environment has to do with climate change. He takes a different position as he doesn't *believe* in climate change, but rather evidence says it *exists*. He talks about the fact that there are now four times more fires than ever, six times bigger fires, and the fire season is now ten weeks longer. Since 1985, 10,400,000 acres have burned. And this is all due to the temperature that has continued to rise from 1880, and 2016 has been the hottest ever. The highest temperature ever recorded in Antarctica was during the last week in February 2017.

For thousands and thousands of years, the carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere has been as high as 280 parts per million (ppm). But during the past several hundred years, it has started to climb due to human activities and is now at 406 ppm. James Hansen, who first brought notice of the phenomenon, had said that we should not go over 350 ppm – but it is too late. And my understanding is that there is no economic mechanism to reduce the concentration from 406 ppm. We will be stuck there for 50 – 70 years even if we were to reduce our emissions to zero.

James Balog has become a global spokesperson on the subject of climate change and the human impact on the environment. He founded the Extreme Ice Survey, the most wide-ranging, ground-based, photographic study of glaciers ever conducted. He mounted about 32 cameras on bed rock in strategic locations in the Arctic, Greenland, Antarctica, and other glaciers around the world. These cameras were programmed to take one picture each hour. His team then collected these photographs and combined them to create time-lapse movies of the melting ice. His two award-winning documentaries are called *Extreme Ice* and *Chasing Ice* proving that glaciers are alive. He also has an excellent presentation as a TED talk. If you are interested, you can see the video at: http://www.ted.com/talks/james_balog_time_lapse_proof_of_extreme_ice_loss. The worst case scenario of melting ice is what the world would look like if all the ice melted. Again, if interested, go to the Business Insider website to see this graphic video: http://www.businessinsider.com/what-earth-would-look-like-if-ice-melted-world-map-animation-2015-2?utm_source=microsoft&utm_medium=referral&utm_term=windowsapp

Despite all this evidence and the fact that 97% of all environmental scientists state that climate change is man-made, there are still deniers. I have met a few of the deniers, and I respond to them that I don't know with 100% certainty that climate change exists and is caused by human activity, but let's look at two alternatives. 1) Let's assume that climate change is real, and we take every precaution to mitigate it: convert to renewable energy, impose a carbon tax, and other actions. But about 30-40 years later, we learn that we were wrong and climate change

was not real and wasn't caused by humans. What are the consequences? We developed unnecessary technology, a negative impact on the economy, and affected the lifestyle of most of the people. 2) Now let's assume that climate change doesn't exist and therefore was not caused by human activity. So we do nothing, but 30-40 years later we learn that we were wrong, and it does exist. What are the consequences? Catastrophic! So take your pick if you don't know for sure.

There is much we can do to help mitigate this phenomenon, but the simplest is that we have a *choice* and that choice is to use our *voice* because of our *love* for the planet. Spread the word wherever and whenever you can so more and more people become aware of this major problem.