

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Exegetical Analysis on Revelation 11:18 and Related Texts for Environmental Conservation and Sustainability in Africa Context

Bolaji Aquila Adegoke Adesanya<sup>1</sup> Adebayo Ola Afolaranmi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies; Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria

Email: [bolajiaadesanya@gmail.com](mailto:bolajiaadesanya@gmail.com);  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1086-1050>

<sup>2</sup>Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies; Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria

Email: [afolaranmi.adebayo@lcu.edu.ng](mailto:afolaranmi.adebayo@lcu.edu.ng);  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8057-137X>

## Article History

Received 2025-07-18

Revised 2025-08-02

Accepted 2025-09-16

Published 2025-10-13

## Keywords

Afforestation

Religion and Conservation

Environment

Exegetical Analysis

Sustainability

## How to cite

Adesanya, B.A.A. & Afolaranmi, A.O. (2025). Exegetical Analysis on Revelation 11:18 and Related Texts for Environmental Conservation and Sustainability in Africa Context *Adom Social Science and Humanities Journal*, 1(3): 326-347.

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s)



## Abstract

This article examines environmental conservation and sustainable development in the African Context vis-à-vis the texts of Revelation 11:18 and related pericope. The writers' focus is on why the need for afforestation in place of conservation for viable environmental sustainability in Africa continent. The study uses the method of historical-grammatical analyses of the text of Revelation 11:18 and other related texts in the Scripture. This is couple with all literature materials available from the Theological reflections from Conferences of Academic Journal. The article expatiates on environmental issues that are currently goings-on in some selected nations in Africa as reported in the daily newspaper and social media. The paper explains the positions and beliefs of Christianity and opinions of the writers based on the biblical injunctions for every reader to be aware and be obedient to the scriptural texts for sustainability of the earth to prevent any further earthquake. This study is on exegetical analysis and elucidates on the view of the Revelations 11:18 and other related texts for the discussions. The study concludes by recommending the need for environmental care with godly sustainability for the earth, to be devoid of pollution and the effects on human

life. The writers recommend that every Church leader should continuously enlightening his parishioners on adequate care of environment and recognition of God as the Creator and Supreme owner of the earth. Then religious leaders must encourage, educate and mobilize relevant government and her agencies through a use of all available mass media and internet, to mobilize the world to join this environmental campaign for sustainability.

## Introduction

The earth is the LORD's and its fullness; the world, and those who live in it (Psalm 24:1). In the account of creation from biblical perspective, the earth, as the natural habitat of human beings and things, provides humans with the necessary environment and dwelling space for survival and prosperity. The creation account in the book of Genesis 1 narrates how God created every constituent of the earth in six days, composed of the earth, firmament and natural components found therein. The account recognizes that God created the heavens and the earth and everything found therein (cf. Gen. 1:1; Psalm 24:1; Rev. 4:11). The expression in Revelation 4:11 in particular states: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Emphasis added the Bible says that He puts man in the garden (environmental care) to dress it and maintain all the elements therein. Environmental care is an imperative course for humans. According to Ekanade and Orimoogunje (2017) opines that God-centred inherent value of nature is termed "theistic intrinsic value." Studies have revealed that Plato's philosophy indeed influenced the Gnostic view of the physical world, which arose within the first-century Christian Church. The study of the environment is a call to duty and responsibility that is delegated to all humans at every facet of life both individuals and government agencies with their benefits and sustainability (Adigun and Afolaranmi, 2024). Thus, any environmental crisis within the earth in this continent is actually a crisis of existence and a critical contradiction between human and nature.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON SELECTED STUDY AREA ON ENVIRONMENTAL CARE AND THEOLOGY

### 2.1 Nigeria – Oil Spill in Niger Delta

The Niger Delta is located in southern Nigeria along a 450-km coastline of the Gulf of Guinea and covers approx. 7.5% of Nigeria's surface. The Niger Delta is highly populated. In the study area, approx. 43 million people were living in 2020. The most densely populated state is Rivers State with 600–800 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, high pressure on the environment is caused by urbanization, agriculture and resource extraction. The study area in Nigeria is within ecoregions and land use types. (Nwilo and Badejo 2001).

## 2.2 Zambia – Kafue River Toxic Spill

In February 2025, a catastrophic failure of a tailings dam at a Chinese-owned copper mine released approximately 50 million liters of acidic waste into the Kafue River. This disaster devastated aquatic life, contaminated water supplies for millions, and destroyed agricultural lands, prompting a national emergency and international concern over mining practices and environmental safeguards.

## 2.3 Mozambique – Militant Attacks in Niassa Reserve

Islamic State-linked militants attacked the Niassa wildlife reserve, resulting in at least 10 deaths, including anti-poaching scouts and civilians. The violence forced the suspension of conservation activities and displaced local communities, threatening decades of ecological preservation efforts.

## 2.4 South Africa – Rhino Poaching Surge

In the first quarter of 2025, 103 rhinos were killed in South Africa, with 65 of these poachings occurring within national parks. Despite a slight decrease compared to previous years, the continued losses underscore the urgent need for enhanced anti-poaching measures and international collaboration to protect these endangered animals. This selected area will serve as litmus to the issues affecting the environmental conservation.

*Environment:* An environment has been defined variously, based on contexts and usage. While some environmentalists stick to the word environment, others prefer the term “ecological.” According to Williams (2013) the difference between two terms has to do with area of emphasis:- the word “environment” applies to the idea that nature is something that surrounds humans, but at the same time, something that humans have fundamentally outside of and separate from. According to Adesanya (2017) opines that if every Christian arises to God’s original instruction to work and care for His creation, as a good steward, then the purpose of the existence of humans and the church would be fulfilled in ensuring that the provisions of God’s creation are made available to mankind.

*Environment:* Environment is the natural world or habitat, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity. It is a surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant live or operates. Environment, according to the Complete Christian Dictionary for Home, School and office (1997), “it is the natural surrounding or social condition in which people live,” while the Dictionary of Geological Terms (1961), defines environment as: “the sum total of all the external conditions which may act upon an organism or community to influence its development or existence.” According to Faniran (2017), quoting Adalemo (1990), thus at the global level, the environment as an issue came into focus principally after the 1972 United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, which:

Brought the whole world to the realization that we all live on a 'spaceship' with lifesupport systems which are vulnerable to damage from activities in any part of the 'spaceship.'

The Conference serves as an eyes open for actions to be taking in line with the Biblical Creation Account. Although environmental theology, sometimes called eco-theology, as a discipline and field of study, developed during the first half of the twentieth century, its actual roots may be traced to the beginning of creation. But Environmentalists have argued that environmental theology is as old as creation itself. There are many explanations for the subsisting attitude of contemporary Christians to both the social and economic, and importantly, the physical environment; but the major cause has been traced to the type of theology that permeates the church. Ray (1994) is among the then growing number of Christian environmentalists who have made even stronger advocacies for attitudinal change within the mainstream Christian theology and ministry in favour of a God interested in the redemption of his entire, creation generally and the environment in particular.

In the view of an icon in an environmentalist care, Gnanakan (2004) quoted a priest as saying: "Our God is the God of Heaven and Earth, of the sea and rivers, of the sun and moon," a point confirmed by the psalmist generally and in Psalm 148 in particular. Which, invited the entire creation to join in the praise of our Lord and in ways better, more genuine and more spontaneous than humans can ever do, especially in terms of total submission and obedience in strict compliance with God's commands (Gen 6:5-8; Jer:1-13). Finally, Gnanakan (2004) described the expected role of humans in God's creation as follows:

There is a commonness shared between humans and all non-human creation, both because we have a common creator and because we have undergone the same creative process... If humans have an edge over creation, it is primarily in a sense of responsibility to respect this integrity. Here is a sobering thought: creation can survive without humans, we cannot last long without creation's bounties... must now rise and act as responsible stewards and arrest any further damage.

According to Park (2001) the present environmental crises are unprecedented in their pace, magnitude and severity, as exemplified by, among others, certain major environmental disasters such as the Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s and the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986. The study of the crises reveals changes in the environment care caused it. It is mainly because the results of improvements in environmental protection due to new technologies are being, cancelled out by the magnitude of human population growth and economic development.

## **2.5 Environmental Crises and Pollution**

First, there are serious environmental challenges confronting the earth attested to, among other things are, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and the greenhouse effect or global warming. It is evident globally that the ecosystem is in a state of unembellished disequilibrium.

Politicians, environmentalists, climatologists, astronauts, theologians, biologists, and many others professionals in the non-human fields of endeavor, are unanimous that the earth is at a point of ecological tilt. Udezo (2007) notes that "with unstoppable drive, one form of environmental destruction follows yet another, in the name of civilization, rendering our only home gradually uninhabitable."

Second, the present environment crises are partly due to the penchant for neglect by religionists, particularly Christianity, and the resources it can avail itself of in the quest to find the solution to the problem. Beginning with Lynn White's ground-breaking presentation to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1966, titled: "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," a good number of environmentalists have heaped the blame of the existing environmental conundrum on the Judeo-Christian faith. These secular and scientific notions have denied that the Church has any role to play in the restoration or redemption of the earth.

There is an urgent need to establish a nexus between Christian / Biblical theology and environmental theology.

## 2.6 Christian Theology and the Environment

While the Bible does not specifically use the word "environment," there exists profound evidence and information about creation and its care on almost every page of the Scripture. The statement that God created the earth and its contents for his pleasure and good purpose is unambiguously engraved on the pages of the Scripture. Indeed, what currently constitutes "Christian theology of the environment" is not fully representative of what the Bible says, but what Christian theologians and interpreters have made of its contents, especially with respect to creation and the role of man in it.

Hence, what needs to be redefined is not Christian Theology *per se* but the [mis]interpretations of the Scripture. The popular position of Christian theology with regard to creation is that man is the crown of creation.

As an academic discipline, eco-theology can be said to have developed as an offshoot of Process Theology, championed by the likes of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. As Process Theology developed, theologians like Paul Tillich (1886-1965) and Joseph Stiller (1904-1987) began to make reflections on a theology that cared for the environment in its entirety, thus resulting in the proper birth of what is known as eco-theology or environmental theology. Overtime, environmental theology came to be a major field of study, especially since the 1960s. In the African context, particularly in Nigeria, voices like Faniran (2004 till 2017) and Adesanya (2017) among others, have contributed immensely to advocating a reorientation of humanity towards responsible living with other forms of creation.

Conradie (2006) is another pioneer of ecological or environment theology. According to Conradie eco-theology may be regarded as a next wave of contextual theology, which

joins liberation theology, back theology and other indigenous theologies in the quest for a theology that practically responds to the real challenge of man's social context in a self-conscious and the categorical manner. He stated that it is an attempt to reclaim the ecological wisdom in Christianity as a response to environmental threat and injustice, seeking to reinvestigate, to discover and renew the Christians traditions in the light of prevalent challenges posed by current environmental crises.

The reality, however, is that there is a serious environmental problem, in fact crisis, which has been traced to human activities, and which has to be addressed by all, including Christians. As pointed out by Bohlin of *Probe Ministries* ( <https://bible.org/view/probe>, accessed 20/12/2024), the news media are full of story concerning environmental disaster of one kind or another, including climate and associated global warming; endangered species; destruction of rainforest and nuclear accidents (cf. Faniran, 2015).

## 2.7 Theology of Environmental Care

God has not left man in doubt about His intentions for the care of the natural environment. As Audi (2013) clearly points out:

God demonstrates in many places in... the Holy Bible how the world he created should be cared for. The book of Genesis tells the story of God's creation of the world in six days and resting on the seventh day (Gen.1:1-22). The New Testament also confirms that Jesus created all that was ever made (Jn. 1:1-3). The bible also declares that the world that God created was good/very good (Gen.1:12,18, 31), which among other things is indicative of the care pf God for the creation and confirmed by the beauty one sees all around and his inspired poets, philosophers, scientists and historians.

God not only makes His care for the environment clear, but also indicates that environmental care is to be done by humans as steward of God creation. God's preservative disposition is the natural environment should be reflected in the attitude of humans to the environment. Kolawole (2013) argues that man's activities in relation to the environment must always be done in reference to God as the creator, as well as God's control and purpose for the earth, which should be exclude uncontrolled use of the earth's resources.

According to Faniran (2013), there are also informal forums for environmental education outside of the school system, including workshop, Nature camps, libraries, exhibitions, and audio-visual shows. The question environmental care enlightenment, the answer to which will give some indication of what exists in theological education generally and education what needs to be done about the theological education generally, and what needs to be done about the theological education curriculum in particular. Environmental education curricula should be designed with personal change in mind (Yount, 1996). Thus, it an imperative to include knowledge of environmental matters, conservation and sustainable

development in the theological education and retraining even with periodic seminars for the stakeholders.

Environmental care covers diverse issues, which include replenishing the vegetation, preventing flooding and erosion, avoiding the pollution of air and water with chemicals, dealing with the so-called “greenhouse effect,” etc. However, many church members may have limited knowledge of some of the issues usually discussed. In order to examine the approaches some church leaders in Africa may adopt, in exposing and enlightening their immediate members to environmental issues. We consider it sufficient to use the general term “environmental pollution” (which most church members are likely to understand only in the term “environmental sanitation” commonly touted by governments in the continent of Africa), and tree planting, which is a basic attitude required for vegetation replenishment and easily understood by most church members because of government reforestation campaigns.

The following points derived from the study of Ango, which will prove useful:

- Theological institutions should develop appropriate curricula for environmental care that articulate needs, goals, objectives, activities, contents, methods of an evaluation (Ango, 2012).
- Churches should deliberately go beyond using the pulpit to make announcements and deliver instructions on environmental care, but include environmental issues in Bible Study and Sunday School classes.

African’s natural environment is characterized by variety of soils or land, landforms/topographies, vegetation, minerals, water, climates, etc. Other factors bearing great influence on the environment are cultural practices, economy, science and technology, population. Human activities such as deforestation, overgrazing, gas flaring and mining can have adverse effects on the Africa environment. The effects of all these ranges from such hazardous impacts of global warming as flooding, coastal erosion, atmospheric and water pollution to mention but a few. The land is a subsume of the earth, created by God. According Adesanya and Afolaranmi (2024) opines that the landowner is God, which is never impartial about His reward and judgment. He rewards everybody accordingly. God is never unjust in His judgment to every mankind. He knows more intently the heart of a man. God will judge the world someday. An important eschatological implication is the hope of ultimate victory for those who diligently work for God in the vineyard responsibilities.

### **3. OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS CONCEPT ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY**

According to Adesanya (2016) succinctly put that, environmental sustainability involves humans and God. He is the one that creates, and give wisdom and strength to man, to understand, to will and to obey Him. Human beings can oblige into God’s agenda, because He knocks the heart of men and will not force anybody. These calls for humility, obedience, open heart and join God, where He is at work. In Deuteronomy 23:13, Moses commanded the

Israelites in the wilderness to keep their environment clean because the LORD was in the midst of their camp. The Israelites was instructed to carry digging tools along to be used to dispose to nature's call outside their domain in order to prevent epidemics. What a good consciousness about their lives and sustainable development of the environment.

The gospels narratives of Jesus' feeding of the thousands of people (Mat.14:20, Luke 9:14, John 6:10-13, Mat.15:37-38, Mark 8:8-9) present to us with very an insightful adequate information about Jesus' attitude to environmental matters. In the narratives it was told that after multiplying the few loaves of bread and fish for the famished audience to eat Jesus instructed His disciples to gather the crumbs. Superficially, the story reveals Jesus theological continuity with Old Testament prophets like Elisha in their concern for the people's welfare (2Kings 4:42). Likewise our own generation should not left out in doing so. Thus Cleanliness is next to godliness.

### **3.1 Environmental Ethical Matters**

Environmental ethics are certain set of rules and principles that should be adhered strictly with regard to the environment. It questions the activities of the human race vis-a-vis certain key factors that are associated with the environment. This cautions human activities in his natural habitat.

### **3.2 Biblical Foundation for Environmental Ethics**

According to Ojo (2017) writes that a superficial study of the Bible has resulted in erroneous views that the books of the Bible show little concern for humans relationship to nature which eventually encourages its mindless expectation of nature. This perception is actually supported by reference to the biblical commands to "subdue" the earth and "have dominion" over all living things. Gen. 1:28.

### **3.3 Conservation and its Mode**

Conservation of an Environment is a practice that paves the way for protecting the environment and natural resources on the individual, cooperate organisational as well as governmental levels. Various important environmental issues that are taking a heavy toll on human lives. Ranging from overpopulation, ozone depletion hydrological issues, and global warming to deforestation, and pollution, all these issues pose a severe threat to the existence of humankind. Unless environmental conservation is becoming an effective mass movement, it is futile to expect positive growth especially in the age of technological advancement, which holds the potential to bring a revolution to save our planet from destruction.

**Importance of Environmental Conservation:** Thus, environmental conservation has become gradually vital. The following points emphasis the fast need of attention to protect the environment from further dilapidation:

1. To restore the ecological balance
2. To ensure the protection of biodiversity

3. To reduce water air and land pollutions.
4. To facilitate the conservation of natural resources for our future generations
5. To implement sustainable development
6. To save our planet from harmful repercussions of global warming.

Some ways of Conserving Environment:

- Natural non-renewable resources must be utilized properly
- Afforestation is the best way to conserve the environment and embrace reforestation.
- Control pollution and population
- Adopt an environment-friendly lifestyle
- Adopt waste management techniques
- Species on the verge of extinction should be saved.
- Create public awareness
- Deforestation must be stopped

### **3.4 Concept of Deforestation and its Implications on Environment**

Deforestation involves permanent end of forest cover to make that land available for residential, commercial or industrial purpose. Its long time effects can be severely devastating and alarming as they may cause flood, soil erosion, increase in global warming, climate imbalance, wildlife extinction, and other serious environmental issues. Overpopulation has put serious pressures on available scarce resources and has been viewed as the primal cause of all types of environmental issues. Industrial and household wastes, acid rain, ozone layer of depletion, genetic engineering and human sprawl are other identifiable environmental issues. Large industries and power plants need a large area to set up its facilities. In some part of Africa, deforestation has happened in the past for creating Industries (Steel, Power, Pharmaceutical, Fast Moving Consumer Goods etc.), Infrastructure (National Highways, Airports, etc.), and Mining (Coal, Minerals, Metals, etc.), Oil and Gas exploration, even Thermal Power plants, etc.

### **3.5 Afforestation and Reforestation with its Implications**

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2013), says Afforestation and reforestation project activities contribute to climate change mitigation by capturing "bio-sequestering" the atmospheric carbon and locking it into the living and dead biomass in the ecosystem (e.g. tree biomass, soil organic carbon). Afforestation is the process of planting trees, or sowing seeds, in a barren land devoid of any trees to create a forest. The term should not be confused with reforestation, which is the process of specifically planting native trees into a forest that has decreasing numbers of trees. Furthermore, afforestation refers to the process of establishing a forest on land that was

previously not forested. This meaning it involves planting trees in an areas where there were no trees before, essentially "converting non-forested land to forested land" through human intervention, like planting seeds or seedlings; this is different from reforestation, which involves replanting trees in a previously forested area that has been depleted.

According to Parthiban and et al. (2022), reforestation may be defined as the 'restocking of felled or otherwise cleared woodland'. In other words, reforestation is the raising of a forest species artificially in an area, which had forest vegetation before. Ownership and implementation of reforestation projects by local communities and local public service entities can have several advantages (co-benefits) if thoroughly implemented in this continent. Direct flow of benefits of reforestation to the local entities would result in stronger engagement of the entities and would enhance the sustainability of forest resources resulting in long-term flow of carbon and non-carbon benefits. Benefits in terms of non-timber forest produce flowing at an early stage in a reforestation project would make the project more attractive.

Afforestation on the other hand is 'the establishment of a forest by artificial means on an area from which forest vegetation has always or long been absent.' The following key points should be paid attention to about afforestation:

*Land type:* Afforestation occurs on land that has not been forested for a significant period, of years. Then the Purpose and the primary goal of afforestation is to create new forest ecosystems where none previously existed, contributing to environmental benefits like carbon sequestration, soil conservation, and biodiversity enhancement. It gives new opportunity to fresh air in abundant within the area and beyond. The methods of planting is crucial. Afforestation can involve direct tree planting, seed dispersal, or promoting natural regeneration through assisted migration techniques.

According to Duan and Abduwali (2021) opines that common afforestation materials include seeds, seedlings, and cuttings. Each material has its advantages and disadvantages. The selection of suitable afforestation materials should fully consider the characteristics of the tree species. They says that many studies have shown that the age of planting materials, planting season and time, and methods all affect the survival rate. It is therefore an important factor to consider the aforementioned conditions, plating materials and season with time.

### **3.6 Biblical Concept of Afforestation**

The biblical concept of afforestation relates to themes of stewardship, restoration, and the care of creation as emphasized in various Scriptures. While the term "afforestation" itself is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, the principles behind it can be derived from several key themes:

1. *Stewardship of the Earth*: It is an imperative according to Genesis 2:15, human beings are tasked to "till and keep" the Garden of Eden, which implies a sense of duty to care for the environment. This stewardship encompasses planting and nurturing trees, which play a vital role in ecological balance and sustainability in existence of humans in any particular region of the continent.
2. *Restoration*: Throughout the Bible, there are calls for restoration and healing of the land. For example, Isaiah 61:3 speaks of God giving "the oil of gladness instead of mourning" and "oaks of righteousness," symbolizing restoration through planting and nurturing trees.
3. *Symbolism of Trees*: A biblical texts says Trees often symbolize life, growth, and sustenance. Psalms 1:3 describes a righteous person as being "like a tree planted by streams of water," highlighting the importance of trees in providing nourishment and stability. This is the importance of afforestation.
4. *Community and Provision*: Trees provide food, shelter, and resources, which align with biblical principles of community care and provision. Then, Deuteronomy 20:19-20 emphasizes the significance of not destroying fruit-bearing trees during warfare, reflecting a respect for creation.
5. *Environmental Justice*: The Bible advocates for the care of the vulnerable and the land, suggesting that afforestation can be an act of justice, ensuring that future generations have access to natural resources.

In summary, while the Bible does not explicitly discuss afforestation, it promotes the underlying values of environmental stewardship, restoration, and the intrinsic value of creation, which can inform modern practices of afforestation and ecological care for sustainability of humans. Hence, Afforestation is necessary to combat the issues of global warming, soil erosion, pollution, and the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological balances. There are two ways, i.e. afforestation and reforestation, the development of new forest on a non-forest land is called afforestation, but reforestation means the reestablishment of the forest cover by either naturally or artificially (manual planting of trees). Distinction between afforestation and reforestation is that reforestation is replanting trees in an area that was previously forested but has been deforested. While afforestation is establishing a forest on land that has not been forested for a long time.

### 3.7 A Hindrance to Reforestation

#### *Lack for Finances and Low Economic Income*

Reforestation needs to be champion be the government and her agencies with the support of the community leader, where the land has degraded. Then Reforestation of any degraded forest land could be hindered by lack of availability of budgetary finance, low economic returns to the agencies that are concerned, and lack of entrepreneurial and managerial capacity at the level of the local communities and public service entities. Private sector

investment is not likely to be available for reforestation of any lands, because private rights over public lands cannot be legally acquired or because the low productivity of these lands does not assure adequate return on investment. However, a land can be reforested by the local communities, local public service entities, or private enterprises and land-owners if adequate support in terms of capacity building and initial finance is provided to them.

### **3.8 Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development on environment. It is the practice of managing natural resources responsibly, ensuring that current needs are care for, without conceding the ability of future generations to access those same resources, essentially targeting to sustain ecological balance and minimize environmental damage through practices like biodiversity protection, resource conservation, and pollution reduction. According to Muhammed et al. (2024) opines that environmental sustainability has ascended as a paramount concern in recent epochs, propelled by the discernment of the profound ramifications human activities wield on planetary health and the progeny's well-being. Historically, humanity has often exploited natural resources with scant regard for their finite nature, precipitating deforestation, depletion of fisheries, and the depletion of fossil fuels. Environmental sustainability stands as a fundamental tenet within the broader concept of sustainability. It asserts that meeting our needs should not endanger the environment's quality, emphasizing the necessity to preserve ecosystems for the benefit of future generations (Kaswan et al., 2019). Then the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development have progressed, revolving around a series of interconnected challenges. These include ensuring basic living standards, fostering economic growth, preserving environmental health, and effectively managing social and ecological systems (Halla & Binder, 2020).

Global environmental protection policies need to be adhered and strictly be enforce for the coexistence of humanity. It represents a multidimensional approach to addressing the complex and interrelated challenges fronting the planet's ecosystems and natural resources. These policies are crafted within the framework of international collaboration, recognizing that environmental issues transcend national borders and entail collective action. One of the central pillars of global environmental governance is the United Nations, which serves as a platform for negotiating and executing agreements to protect the environment. The effectiveness of global environmental protection policies is contingent upon several factors, including political will, resource allocation, and the involvement of various stakeholders. While international agreements provide a framework for action, their implementation often requires domestic policies, institutional mechanisms, and financial resources at the national and sub-national levels. Additionally, monitoring, reporting, and compliance mechanisms are essential for tracking progress and holding countries accountable for their commitments. However, global environmental protection policies must evolve in response to emerging issues and scientific insights.

## 4. Exegesis Of Revelation 11:18 And Its Implications

‘But the nations became wrathful, and your own wrath came, and the appointed time came for the dead to be judged and to reward your slaves the prophets and the holy ones and those fearing your name, the small and the great, and to bring to ruin those ruining the earth.’ (Revelations 11: 18, New World Translation)

### 4.1 Background to the Book of Revelation

According to McCain (2014) opines that, the book of Revelation was written by John the Beloved, who identifies himself five times in the book. The church universally accepted John as the author, and when you look at the internal material, it emphasizes John’s distinctive words, such as *lamb true*, and *word*, and his themes of light versus darkness, love versus hatred, and good versus evil. McCain (2014) writes that the book of Revelation is quoted freely by many of the early church fathers and they attribute its authorship to John. Revelation was written when John was on the Isle of Patmos, a small, desolate, volcanic rock island in the Aegean Sea, where Romans banish criminals and political offenders. It was probably written during the persecution of Domitian, about A.D. 95 or 96. Some scholars date the book in the reign of Nero (perhaps AD 65-68).

The book of Revelation was written to seven churches in the area of Asia Minor, writing by McCain (2014), beginning with the church in Ephesus, and then proceeding clockwise (Rev.2-3). This book was probably taken in clockwise sequence and to all the seven churches. It was probably quickly copied and passed throughout the Mediterranean world; hence, the early and wide acceptance of this book. It is a small island about sixty miles from Ephesus in the Aegean Sea. John was kept there as a political prisoner but was released. Tradition says he died peacefully in his sleep in Ephesus. Just as Genesis is the book of beginning, Revelation is the book of ending. The Revelation is not primarily a focus on prophetic events, but on Jesus Christ. The first verse indicates it is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:1). The word *revelation* means “unveiling or disclosure,” and thus, it is the final disclosure of who Jesus Christ is, this book is a self-revelation, because Jesus Christ is giving these revelations to John the Revelator to write down. The book is called “the Revelation of Jesus Christ,” also known as *Apocalypse*, a transliteration of the word “unveiling” or “disclosure.” It is God’s final statement about the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. John writes, “Behold, He is coming in the clouds, and every eye will see him, even they who pierced Him. All the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen” (Rev. 1:7). The style and contexts of writing any book cannot be better understood without the purpose for which the author was writing as well as its occasion and the recipients (Adesanya, 2017).

Revelation of John on the Inland of Patmos in the text of chapter eleven and verse eighteen (Rev. 11:18) is the focus of this study. The structure of Rev 11:18 corresponds to Rev 10:11. In this latter verse, there are two groups of characters: firstly, the prophet(s), and

secondly, the “peoples, nations, languages and kings.” This second group may be equated with “those who dwell on the earth” in Rev 11:10; indeed, v.10 makes clear that the conflict in Rev 11 is between the prophets and “those who dwell on the earth.” In killing the two narratives, the beast from the bottomless pit is acting in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants of the earth. Because of the similarities between Rev 11:18 and Rev.10:11, we may again assert that the “destroyers of the earth” corresponds to the “peoples, nations, languages and kings” who act against God’s revealed will as given through his prophets.

The statement in Rev. 11:18 in the light of its antecedent and of the narrative unit of which it forms a part. Our basis is that the declaration of the 24 elders is part of a sanctuary/heaven scene that summarizes or draws together the lessons from what has gone before. However, these scenes also foreshadow what is to come in the narrative; accordingly, it is also instructive to examine Rev. 11:18 in the light of what follows in the book of Revelation.

In the text of Revelation after ch.11, it is evident that it is the beast that is at the heart of antagonism against God. Precisely as it is the beast from the bottomless pit (Rev 11:7) that is the antagonist of God in the account of the narrative. Just as the beast makes war on and slays the two narratives, so too the beast is the great persecuting power in the subsequent chapters of Revelation. It is the beast, Babylon, and the nations who follow them who are responsible for the destruction of the earth, through their opposition to God and their moral corruption of the earth. In God’s economy, He Himself delivers the seven plagues upon the earth, the destruction for which the enemies of God are ultimately responsible.

The phrase “destroying the destroyers of the earth” must be understood in the context of the narrative with which it is connected, in relation to the “wrath of God” and in terms of the broader structure of Revelation 11-20. A correct understanding of this text in its context reveals it to be referring to the moral destruction of the world generally, and to the persecution and martyrdom of God’s messengers specifically. While environmental irresponsibility may be understood as being subsumed by the issues of morality and rebellion against God in a theological sense, it can be deduced that it is not the primary concern of this text. In spite of this, Rev 11:18 continues to be an ever-ready and popular weapon with which to combat those who are perceived to be destroying the natural environment. We may certainly affirm that, “God is passionately concerned for what he has created and works to affirm his creation against those who destroy it” (Bredin, 2010). However, the way in which Rev 11:18 has been popularly used in the past has been misleading. There are many other ways in which we may appropriately affirm from Scripture our responsibility to care for creation.

Revelation 11:18 is a verse that has been popularly used in some interesting contexts that are probably not in mind when the words were written. Jones (2007) writes in his commentary that this verse “has reference to the destroying of those who will be destroying this earth with nuclear weapons and high-powered explosives when Christ returns to earth.”

Similarly, Miller (2009) comments that “humans have the capacity to destroy ecosystems on a global scale. Our scientific belief in this horrific potential parallels the biblical judgment that the destroyers of the earth themselves will be destroyed.” An even more popular application of this verse has to do with caring for the natural environment, so that the “destroyers of the earth” are understood to be those who are responsible for the degradation of the earth’s natural resources (Bredin, 2010). The words of Revelation 11:18 were proclaimed by the twenty-four elders in heaven who fall on their faces and worship God at the end of the narrative of the two witnesses (Rev.11 :15-16) and before the vision of the woman and the dragon in Rev. 12. The statement about the destroyers of the earth is therefore best understood by analyzing the context of the preceding and following narratives.

In Revelation 6:9-11 that the martyrs under the altar petitioned God to judge the earth and avenge their unjust deaths. They asked “ How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” The elders note that the nations were enraged. This likely refers to the peoples who reject God’s authority being enraged against God and His Lamb. They resisted, and God patiently waited (2 Peter 3:9). But at last, God is bringing justice to the earth. The elders are thankful that Your wrath came upon the unjust and ungodly. They are also grateful that the time came for the dead to be judged. The dead will be separated into believers and unbelievers, as sheep are separated from goats Matthew 25:32-33. Then all the dead will be judged for their deeds, both believers and non-believers (Romans 2:6; Revelation 20:12). The elders here recognize this but appear to look forward with gratitude to the time when faithful believers are rewarded. All believers will be judged for the deeds they do, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). The elders look forward to great anticipation for God to reward His bond-servants. The term bond-servants refers to those who are born again through faith in Jesus John 3:14-15

The elders note a number of categories of bond-servants who will be rewarded. They mention: Prophets, saints, those who fear Your name, as well as the small and the great. The prophets would include those who testified and witnessed for Jesus. The word saints translates the Greek word “*αγιοις*” which means “holy” or “set apart” for a special purpose. It is an adjective, so context determines what is being set apart for a special purpose. Sometimes “*αγιοις*” refers to the scriptures (“Holy Scriptures”) and other times it refers to the third member of the Trinity (“Holy Spirit”). Often, the term saints is used to refer to any believer in Jesus, those set apart as holy in Christ (as in Romans 1:7). This applies to the small and the great. The term the small and the great could apply to the small and great in the eyes of those on the earth. It may also apply to the small and the great in the eyes of God. As Jesus instructed us, often the great of the earth will be the least in God’s kingdom and vice-versa (Matthew 19:30, 20:16). Jesus drew all men to Himself through His death on the cross. Satan lost his right to reign. But Satan apparently continued to rule, within bounds set by God. But, now at last Satan’s reign will end. It will be completely cast down. This leads to an outpouring of gratitude from the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God. Presumably, these twenty-four elders will soon be sharing their reign with Jesus upon the

earth. This is a part of the reward promised to Jesus's *bond-servants* who overcome as He overcame (Revelation 3:21). The word translated *bond-servants* is the Greek word "δουλοισι" which means "servant." This is the same word also translated "*bond-servants*" in Revelation 1:3 where this revelation is said to have been given to John to show to "[Jesus's] bond-servants." The promise in Revelation 1:3 is that a great reward will be given to those who heed and do the words of this prophecy. We see now the fulfilment of that promise unfolding in this passage. Finally, justice that God promised is coming upon the earth. All the rewards promised to the bond-servants who overcame will be delivered unto them. And like wise, those who destroy the earth will be themselves be destroyed.

## 5. Conclusion And Recommendations

The writers recommend that every Church leader should continuously enlightening his parishioners on adequate care of environment and recognition of God as the Creator and Supreme owner of the earth. Then religious leaders must encourage, educate and mobilize relevant government and her agencies through a use of all available mass media and internet, to mobilize the world to join this environmental campaign on sustainability. The curriculum of the Theological education with the educators should embrace the issues of environmental care and sustainability. Conferences should be initiated by different fora for diversity of knowledge to be annexed together for human coexistence with the natural habitats. United Nations should encourage Africa Leadership more, in other to enacts law and enforce the international law on the industrial sites and mining sites for protection of natural resources.

## 6. Further Research

This paper has examined the environmental issues with sustainability in relation to humanity and how humans have impacted on their environment. It could be deduced that the impact of environmental care and sustainability at which humans have on environment determine the level at which the continent will be habitable humans in this context of Africa. And this have influence on the climate change for the productivity of man labour while tiling the ground. The rewarder of those who diligently cultivate the ground will definitely compensate individual accordingly. Therefore, each religious leader should inculcate and imbibe attitude of educating the parishioners and the theological educators roles is not being left out in sustaining the environment. Government policies at all level of the continent and global should embrace and then enforce a global environmental protection policy as to avoid any depletion of ozone layer.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Author Bio Note

**Bolaji Aquila Adegoke Adesanya** - [bolajiaadesanya@gmail.com](mailto:bolajiaadesanya@gmail.com),

Bolaji Aquila Adegoke Adesanya holds Master of Theology in Biblical Languages from the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. He is currently a PhD in Biblical Languages student at the Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.

**Adebayo Ola Afolaranmi**-[afolaranmi.adebayo@lcu.edu.ng](mailto:afolaranmi.adebayo@lcu.edu.ng)

Adebayo Ola Afolaranmi holds a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria. He was a Christian educator for over two decades with the Nigerian Baptist Convention. He currently lectures at the Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.

## References

- Adalemo, L. A. (1990). Geography and the environmental challenges in: Birch, C. 1965, *Nature and God*. London: SCM Press.
- Adesanya, B. A. (2015). *"Titus style of leadership and its implication for contemporary church leadership"* A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Divinity in Theology graduate, Department of theology in theological studies NBTS, Ogbomoso, 30.
- Adesanya, B. A. (2016). "Environmental Theology in Biblical Reflections" *"Niger Delta Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol.3 No. 2 November. ISSN 244-D44X (print) eISSN 2449\_2124 (Online). Niger Delta Christian Association for Academic Research.* 112.
- Adesanya, B. A. (2017). Vital sustainability in Matthew 16:18 a reflection for church environmental concerns, *Journal of creation and environmental care (JCEC)*141-150.
- Adesanya B. A. (2017). *Reconciliation in 11 Corinthians 5:16-21 and its relevance for pastoral responsibility*. A. Thesis submitted for the award of the degree of Master of Theology (M. Th.) in New and Old Testament Studies, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, June 2017.
- Adesanya, B. A. A., and Afolaranmi, A. O. (2024), Exegetical analysis of Matthew 20:1–16 in the light of workers' welfare and economic management in the African context. *African journal of culture, history, religion and traditions* 7(3), 77-89.  
<https://doi.org/10.52589/AJCHRT-LCRBTEAG>
- Adesanya, B. A. A. (2025). Evangelism through artificial intelligence generated-content: opportunities and pitfalls. *The pastoral counsellors: Journal of Nigerian association of pastoral counsellors*, 4, 56–67. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14599695>

- Adigun, O. J., and Afolaranmi, A. O. (2024), Curbing the Effect of Climate Change for Sustainable Development through Digital Transformation and Environmental Sustainability. *British Journal of Computer, Networking and Information Technology*, 7(2), 68-85. <https://doi.org/10.52589/BJCNIT-VF1XXA11>
- Ango, S. P. (2012). Curriculum development for ministerial training, in: *Theological education and ministerial training in the Nigerian Baptist convention*, 217-228. Lagos: Baptist College of Theology.
- Ansah, C.E.; Abu, I.-O.; Kleemann, J.; Mahmoud, M.I.; Thiel, (2022). M. Environmental Contamination of a Biodiversity Hotspot—Action Needed for Nature Conservation in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Sustainability*, 14, 14256. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142114256>.
- Audi, M., (2013). The theocentric approach, in: Adetoye Faniran et al (eds.), *Theology of creation and environment*, 189-200. Bangalore: Theological Book Trust.
- American Geological Institute, (1961). *Dictionary of geological terms*. American geological institute New York, Dolphine Books, Doubleday & Co. Inc., 545.
- Banda Jr., Sam (2008). *Deforestation reaches worrying level – UN. Africa News. Archived from the original on 2008-12-06*.
- Barnett, J. P. (2014). Direct seeding southern pines: development of techniques, use, and current status. *Tree plant notes*. 57(1):35-48.
- Bond, W. J. and Midgley, J. J. (2001). Ecology of sprouting in woody plants: The persistence niche. Vol. 16, *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*. 45-51
- Bredin, M. (2010). *The Ecology of the new testament: creation, re-creation, and the environment* Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica, 168.
- Conradie, Ernst M. (2006). *Christianity and ecological theology*, Stellenbosch:SunPress.
- Daniels, T. D, and Simpson, D. G. (1990). Seedling production and processing: bareroot. Regen Br Columbia's For Univ Br Columbia Press Vancouver. 206-226.
- Doyle, Alister (2008). *Africa's deforestation twice world rate-U.N. atlas. Reuters*.
- Duan, J. and Abduwali, D. (2021). Basic theory and methods of afforestation. The creative commons attribution license <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.9616> 1-23
- Ekanade, O., and Orimoogunje O., (2017). Theological roots of environmental crisis. sacred earth ministry *Journal of creation and environmental care (JCEC)* 1-15
- Faniran, A. (2015). Christian stewardship and ecological/environmental engineering for pastors. (In preparation as part of ICHE Text Book Series).
- Faniran, A. and Emiola Nihinlola, (2017). The environment and Christian theological education and ministry in africa *Journal of creation and environmental care (JCEC)* 60-79
- Halla, P., & Binder, C. (2020). Sustainability assessment: introduction and framework. In Binder, C., Wyss, R., & Massaro, E. (Eds.), *Sustainability assessment of urban systems* (7–29). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108574334.003>
- McCarthy, Michael (2008). *Nature laid waste: The destruction of Africa. The Independent. Archived from the original on October 17, 2017. Retrieved January 20, 2025*.

- Muhammed, S., Hassan, F. U., Islam, M. S., Toriman, M. E. B., Rehim, A., Raza, H. M. A. Nawaz R. (2024). Environmental sustainability (1-12) <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-2845-3.ch001>
- Jones, G. E. (2007). *A verse by verse commentary on revelation* East Sussex, UK: Garners Books, 130.
- Kaswan, V., Choudhary, M., Kumar, P., Kaswan, S., & Bajya, P. (2019). Green production strategies. In Ferranti, P., Berry, E., & Jock, A. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of food security and sustainability* (492–500). <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-100596-5.22292-0>
- Kolawole, S. A. (2013). Biblical and theological strategy for sustainable earth, in: *Theology of creation and environment*, 237-254. Bangalore, India : Theological Book Trust.
- McCain, D. (2014). *Notes on new testament introduction* Jos: Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS) 411-14
- Miller, N. (2009). *Cases in environmental politics: stakeholders, interests, and policymaking* New York, NY: Routledge, 32.
- Nwilo, P. C. and Badejo O. T. (2001). Impacts of Oil spills along the Nigerian coast The Association for Environmental Health and Sciences.
- Oladejo, B. O. (2017). Nexus between environmental and Christian theologies. *Journal of creation and environmental care (JCEC)* 16-32.
- Ojo, J. O. (2017). Exegetical reflections on genesis 2:15 and related texts for credible environmental ethics in nigeria, in: *Journal of creation and environmental care (JCEC)* 108-125
- Park, C. C. (2001). *The environment: principles and applications*. Psychology Press.
- Parthiban, K. T., Sudhagar, R. J., Khanna, S. U., Vennila, S., Sekhar, I., & Barandidharan, K. (2022). Reforestation and afforestation manual. By the institute of natural resources; under the Meghalaya basin development authority.
- Ray, C. A. (1994). *Living the responsible life* Ibadan: Nigerian Baptist Convention, 95
- Tillich, P. (1948). Nature and sacrament, in: *The Protestant Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 94 -112.
- Udezo, B. O. S. (2007). Management of the human environmental hazards in Nigeria: a Christian response, *Nigerian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*: Vol. 1:171-182.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC (2013). Afforestation and reforestation projects under the clean development mechanism. *A reference manual*. accessed on December, 2024; [cdm-info@unfccc.in](mailto:cdm-info@unfccc.in).
- Yount, W. R. (1996). *Created to learn: A christian teacher's introduction to educational psychology*. Nashville, Tennessee: Briadman and Holman Publishers.

Our Affiliate Partners



Philippine Association of  
Research Practitioners,  
Educators and Statistical  
Users. Inc.



Department of Sculpture  
Technology, Takoradi  
Technical University,  
Ghana



Indonesia Scholar  
Research & Publishing,  
Indonesia



CHCALIE, Pangasinan  
State University,  
Philippines



World Federation of  
Zervas Art Clubs, Greece



Club for UNESCO Arts and  
Letters in Achaia, Greece



Department of  
Educational Innovations in  
Science & Technology,  
KNUST. Ghana



Department of Indigenous  
Art & Technology, KNUST,  
Ghana