

Ecology in the Revelation of John

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Abstract. *The topic of this paper presents the application of modern ecological hermeneutics to the text of the Revelation of John. Faced with the challenges of the global ecological crisis, the text of Revelation provides a timeless picture of the impending environmental problems that society is facing nowadays. In accordance to the roots of the ecological crisis and its impact on society, biblical exegesis can provide concrete solutions to this problem. The elaborated sections of Revelation in this paper emphasize the eschatological connection between man and nature and point them to each other. In addition, Revelation emphasizes the union of man and nature in Christ himself - the sacrificial Lamb, who suffers for people and nature. By changing first the individual, then the collective consciousness about men's attitude towards creation, humanity has the opportunity to replace the current picture of the state of the earth's ecosystem - symbolically presented as Babylon - with the potential for a new reality of creation - the New Jerusalem.*

Keywords: *Revelation of John, ecological hermeneutics, ecological crisis, man, creation, ecology, Lamb, nature, Babylon, New Jerusalem.*

1. Introduction

The Revelation of John is the only New Testament writing that is thematically and genre-wise apocalyptic. Exegetically speaking, the apocalyptic writings of the ancient and middle ages, from the Sumerian-Babylonian civilization to the Central American Indian civilizations, abound in the possibilities of diverse interpretations. The revelation of John is no exception in the milieu of apocalyptic writings of ancient civilizations. The exegetes of the early Church approached the interpretation of Revelation very carefully. Interpretations have changed over the centuries, and hermeneutic methods of interpretation have become diverse. Until modern times, the Revelation of John has been the subject of numerous researches.

What enables the book of Revelation to be one of the priority books in all generations of Christians, which is dealt with by both theologians and other branches of the social sciences, is a topic of the end of the world. The active anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ by the first Christians caused the book of Revelation to be interpreted almost literally at that time. As time went on, each generation of Christian exegetes actualized Revelation through the global events of the time, heralding the imminent or imminent end of the world. The world was changing, and the events and images of Revelation received numerous historical-literary, cultural, patristic, up to modern current interpretations.

The current socio-natural global circumstances have conditioned them to become even more relevant through Revelation and to point out the constant aspiration of humanity towards the Second Coming of Christ. The topic of this paper will be ecology in Revelation. The paper will first review the beginnings of

the actualization of environmental conditions as a specific problem of the world community. Quotes from Revelation related to ecology and the problem of nature conservation in general will be elaborated in detail. In the specific interpretations of the passages from Revelation, the literary-historical method of interpretation will be used, as well as the narrative method and the canonical method of interpretation. The main method of interpretation of Revelation will be the ecological hermeneutic method, one of the modern biblical methods of interpretation. This method will be presented through the interpretation of the sections of Revelation through the prism of modern ecological conditions that the world is facing.

2. Ecology as a problem of world civilization of modern age and the role of the Scriptures

The end of the 19th century brought two great changes to world civilization: the beginning of intensive industrialization and the beginning of the intensive decline of the Earth's ecosystem. The rapid progress of technology, primarily in the field of ore exploitation and other natural resources, the growing expansion of urban spaces at the expense of ecosystems has contributed to the disturbance of the previous natural balance between flora and fauna on the one hand, and man on the other. At the center of global consciousness are almost endless possibilities for advancing technology and increasing the potential for using everything the Earth has to offer.

Large corporations, governments of world powers, but also larger and smaller entrepreneurs and landowners exploit forests first, then ores and a relatively new discovery - oil. Industrialization, in addition to its undeniable devastating impact on the planet's ecosystem, also has a huge impact on the global way of thinking in humans. In terms of public opinion, until the middle of the 20th century, preoccupied with both industrialization and the two world wars, world opinion did not show significant interest in the natural environment.

The consequences of wars and human exploitation of planetary resources begin to become clear only from the end of the Cold War, when man's global preoccupation with potential new war conflicts ceases. Experts point to the problem of ecosystem damage, pointing out the still major problems: global warming, numerous extinct and endangered animal species, and irreversibly disturbed forest relief, which has contributed to the global deterioration of air quality, drinking water and plant diversity.

The disturbance of the ecosystem in the global thinking of man had to find a connection with Christianity, as the dominant cultural milieu of the developed countries of Europe and the USA until then. Christianity is facing the disruption of ecosystems precisely through the biblical understanding of the relationship between man and nature. Lynn White's 1967 article stirred up the

American public, directly blaming Christianity for the environmental crisis.¹ His argument is that the Holy Scriptures in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis place man above the entire creation. Man is the crown of God's creation, made in His image, and thus the most exalted creature in relation to other created forms of life.²

This attitude of God towards man, permeated throughout the entire Old Testament, served the advocates of increasing environmental awareness to emphasize the Holy Scriptures as one of the main problems of the ecological crisis. If the Scriptures treat man as a superior being to whom the whole creation is at his disposal, it is precisely this that is responsible for several facts:

- Man, being more sublime than the entire ecosystem, feels called to use the resources of the Earth at will, as his right guaranteed by creation;³
 - Nature is subordinated to man and thus its importance and role in the salvation of the whole world is questioned;
 - A clear distinction is made between the value of human life on the one hand, and plants and animals on the other.

Modern ecological consciousness deals with the human role in the world in a negative sense. Linking man's negative attitude towards nature with the Holy Scriptures necessarily leads the interpreters of the Scriptures to explore the relationship between man and nature, and the very relation of the Holy Scriptures to the environment, and thus to place the Holy Scriptures in the role of protectors of the environment.⁴ Center of view for this "ecological" role of scriptures must become a loving God, revealed in His eternal love for mankind and whole Creation.⁵

¹ Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, 155 (1967).

² Kivatsi Jonathan Kavusa, "Ecological Hermeneutics and the Interpretation of Biblical Texts Yesterday, Today and Onwards: Critical Reflection and Assessment," *OTE* 32 (2019), no. 1, p. 231-250, p. 250.

³ John van Buren, "Critical Environmental Hermeneutics," *Environmental Ethics* 17 (1995), p. 264-266, p. 264. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Ecology – Main Concern for the Christian space of the 21st Century? Catholic and Orthodox Perspectives," in *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 19 (2020), issue 56, p. 126.

⁴ Holmes Rolston III, "The Bible and Ecology" in *Journal of Bible and Theology* 50 (1996), p. 16-26, p. 17.

⁵ Inocent-Mária Vladimír Szaniszló OP, "How much justice are we able to do in our political society? Social ethical and theological reflections on the virtue of justice and its implementation for a development of our post-communist countries also in the period of COVID-19 pandemic," *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 17, pp. 91-113, p. 94.

3. Ecological method of interpretation of Revelation

The ecological hermeneutic method is relatively new. In philosophy, ecological hermeneutics first develops as a concept of examining the human relationship to nature. It seeks to establish environmental awareness at the individual level, and at the global level, environmental ethics.⁶ Ecological hermeneutics tries to answer the question of the notion of human existence in correlation with nature. Ecological hermeneutics develops in the works of Martin Heidegger, Paul Reeker, Wilhelm Dilthey and Hans-Georg Gadamer.⁷

From a philosophical point of view, ecological hermeneutics is applied to theology as a biblical exegetical method. In the early 1960s, an eco-theological current of texts appeared in the United States, observed in the works of Joseph Sitler and Richard Baer.⁸ However, eco-theological texts began to be published en masse after an article by Lynn White in 1967, with a tendency to defend the biblical tradition from accusations of collapsing the natural environment.⁹

Theologians of that time published several professional texts in which they tried to emphasize the affirmative attitude of the Holy Scriptures towards nature.¹⁰ Ecological hermeneutics opens an exegetical field of better research of the relationship between nature and man, and God and nature. Ecological hermeneutics emphasizes two types of critical thinking:

- Ecological critique of Christianity;
- Christian critique of cultural patterns of behavior that cause environmental damage.¹¹

Ecological hermeneutics gained importance only by focusing the world public on existing ecological problems. Lynn's already mentioned article caused the opening of a new field of biblical exegesis. Jürgen Moltmann pointed out that due to the new global problems, it is necessary to re-examine the Holy Scriptures and re-examine the role of nature in the world.¹²

The ecological method of biblical exegesis cannot be adequately applied to biblical texts alone. Modern environmental problems (air pollution, global warming, massive forest deforestation, and extinction of animal species) were unknown to the first recipients of the Scriptures message.¹³ Therefore, it is necessary to apply the literary-critical and narrative method of exegesis, taking

⁶ Martin Drenthen, “Environmental hermeneutics and the meaning of nature”, *Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics* (still not published article) p. 1.

⁷ Drenthen, *Environmental hermeneutics*, p. 1.

⁸ Kavusa, *Ecological Hermeneutics*, p. 231.

⁹ David G Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics: Reflections on Methods and Prospects for the Future”, University of Exeter, UK, November 2014, 3.

¹⁰ Kavusa, *Ecological Hermeneutics*, p. 232.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 236.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 234.

¹³ Wesley Smith, “Becoming More Mindful of Creation,” *Caring for Creation*, Texas, The Center for Christian Ethics Baylor University, 2012, p. 65-72, p. 67.

into account the cultural-social context. With the application of these methods to the biblical text, the ecological lesson, viewed from the prism of the message of the Holy Scriptures to today's recipients, can find its application in the everyday life of the world. The affirmative relation of God to nature, represented above all in the wise and prophetic literature, serves as a good basis for setting up a constructive critique of the present society and its relation to creation. Altered socio-cultural awareness of human society, that adult men are not owners of women, children, property and nature,¹⁴ requires new research of biblical texts and search for an ecological message that is relevant to the current socio-cultural global milieu, which is more in favor of mutual independence. The modern age requires new theological focuses, and the world ecological crisis as a modern problem of society has opened the door to the introduction of ecological exegesis in biblical studies.¹⁵

4. The Revelation of John and ecology

4.1. Rev 5:13 - The Lamb of God as the link between man and nature; ecological motive

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

Even in the very introductory chapters, one of the main motives and protagonists of the action is introduced into the narrative of the Revelation of John: the Lamb. The Lamb, Christ, received authority from God the Father to judge the world and was given to open the scroll with the seven seals that marked the beginning of the end of the world. The Lamb is identified in glory and parts, and power and authority with the One who sits on the throne, and the whole universe calls to them. Transcendental beings, angels (Rev. 5:12) together with the whole creation (Rev. 5:13) praise the Lord. The common exaltation of praise metaphorically shows the identification of everything created in one primary goal: praising and glorifying the Creator.¹⁶ The relationship between the Creator and the entire creation shows that there is no essential difference between angels, people and nature in the domain of eschatological reality. The eschatological identification of people with nature is one of the ecological messages of Revelation, because it binds man to creation not only in the earthly, but also in the future life.

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¹⁴ van Buren, *Critical Environmental Hermeneutics*, p. 266.

¹⁵ Smith, *Becoming*, 68.

¹⁶ Peter S. Perry, "Things having lives' : Ecology, Allusion, and Performance in Revelation 8:9," *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 37 (2010), no 2, p. 105-113, p. 112.

of eschatological reality. The eschatological identification of people with nature is one of the ecological messages of Revelation, because it binds man to creation not only in the earthly, but also in the future life.

However, if the Lamb is viewed as Christ himself, and not as a motive representing Christ, and is considered as an unquestionable motive of sacrifice, the question may be asked: Could the Lamb, if a motive or metaphor, be given one or more interpretations? If the answer were in the affirmative, ecological exegesis, with the previously confirmed unquestionable identification of the Lamb of Christ with the sacrifice he made for the world, could ask the question: why was the Lamb taken as a symbol of sacrifice?

Putting the question in a dialogical perspective, the ecological interpretation leads to the conclusion that the image of the Lamb being sacrificed is important not only for people, but also for nature. The allegorical identification of Christ with the lamb in the ecological interpretation can represent the identification of the God-man with the creation, that is, to confirm Christ's sacrifice through the ecological prism in the correct confession of the Church: Christ is the Lamb of God who sacrifices himself for the life of the world and its salvation. The ecological interpretation of the Lamb as a symbol of the union of man and nature through the God-man Christ does not deviate from the teachings of the Orthodox Church. Consulting Rev. 5:13, this image received eschatological confirmation that the whole world, the whole creation, is called to be saved and to praise the Lord, since it is united precisely in the sacrificed Lamb of Christ.

4.2. Rev 8, 7-12 - four trumpets

The first concrete mention of the role of ecosystems in Revelation is the trumpeting of the 4 trumpets that mark the beginning of the great suffering of the human race. The Lord's wrath due to human evil first pours out on living and inanimate nature, indicating the unbreakable connection of human sin with the destiny of nature.

7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The seventh verse of the eighth chapter of Revelation shows the beginning of the earth's suffering because of human sin. Suffering affects a third of the country - τὸ τρίτον τῆς γῆς. The noun γῆς in the primary meaning refers to the soil, and as the suffering of the grass is specifically mentioned in the further course of the verse, the writer of Revelation could describe the fertile soil, the sown fields on which there is no fruit yet. The beginning of the suffering of the Earth received its final form in Rev. 16: 3-4, where the final suffering of nature through the pouring out of 7 cups of the wrath of the Lord. One third of the trees and all the grass, concrete dominant forms of relief of

Asia Minor¹⁷ The first recipients of Revelation were to present the consequences of human sin as something that would touch them, something that would actually happen in their place. The gradation of the suffering of the natural environment starts from fertile soil, as the basis of plant growth, through trees as a source of oxygen and next to stone, the basic building material, to grass, a clear association with the Kingdom of Heaven. Since the time of the Old Testament, greenery has been an unequivocal allusion to the Garden of Eden, paradise.¹⁸ It should be mentioned that the word grass *χόρτος* can refer to grass, greenery, and grain. Used with the adjective *χλωρός* - green, unequivocally refers to grass and green low vegetation.¹⁹

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

From the suffering of the soil and the basic forms of vegetative growth - ground plants and trees, God's wrath passes to the sea. Water (sea, rivers) is one of the sources of food for the Israelis, but also for the coastal region of Asia Minor. The sea surface that becomes blood prevents the life of sea creatures and the navigation of ships, which in ancient times was the dominant form of traffic, transport and trade in the Mediterranean.

When the water relief suffers, the symbol of blood as an impure factor and pollutant dominates. There is a clear analogy with Exodus 7: 20-21, the conversion of water into blood by Aaron in Egypt. The heritage of the Old Testament, along with the Gospel, is one of the foundations of the faith of the first Christians. The description of the suffering of the sea and later, rivers and springs due to blood, shows that the primary recipients of Revelation are either Jews by birth, or are familiar with the heritage of the Old Testament. Otherwise, the analogy with the Book of Exodus would be ineffective to readers. Also, the analogy with the passage from Exodus 7: 20-21 shows the power and authority of God over creation and sinful people. God justly punishes unjust and sinful people, and punishment is first suffered by the creation for which people are responsible.²⁰

A key part of the relationship between God and the flora and fauna is giving epithets to living creatures in the sea. In the Greek original, the phrase

¹⁷ The origin of the Revelation of John dates back to around 96 AD, and the city of Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, is taken as the place of origin by most exegetes. In the area of Ephesus, there was a Christian community led by the disciples of John the Theologian.

¹⁸ Jame Shaefer, "Valuing the Goodness of the Earth" in *Caring for Creation*, Texas, The Center for Christian Ethics Baylor University, 2012, p. 11-19, p. 15.

¹⁹ In interpreting the words from the Greek original, the English Standard Version of the Greek edition was used, taken from the site: "Interlinear Bible," Google: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear>

²⁰ Perry, *Things having lives*, p. 110.

ἔχοντα ψυχὰς - having souls (lives) was used. The term ἡ ψυχὴ in ancient Greek philosophy refers to human, clearly separating him from the rest of the living world. In the New Testament, the term also predominantly refers to humans, while in Revelation 8: 9, sea creatures are given this epithet. By identifying humans and sea beings with the common defining term of life (soul), mankind is called to determine its relationship with God through the image of the suffering of sea beings.

Universally speaking, man's guilt draws not only anger at him, but also at the animal world. This verse of Revelation can be interpreted as a kind of lament of the writer of Revelation over water souls who suffer because of human sin.²¹

Revelation definitely encourages readers to think about creation, emphasizing the moment of suffering of creation as an eschatological presentation of the unbreakable connection between human and nature.²²

The created man from the Book of Genesis is placed above all created beings and still life, both to govern them and to be responsible for them at the end of the world and time.

10. Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

11. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

The third trumpet of wrath brings plague on rivers and springs of water. The writer unequivocally connects the downfall of the work with the existence of people in its primary form. If the first two trumpets destroyed the creation to the extent that they leave man in a shortage of food, the third trumpet destroys drinking water, bringing death to anyone who drinks water. The gradation of the impact force on the ecosystem is reflected in the comparison of 4 subject verses: the first trumpet brings hail and fire from the sky that falls to the ground, the second trumpet a whole mountain that is thrown into the sea, and the third a star that falls from the sky. This gradation indicates the gradual increase of the ecological catastrophe with the increasing negative impact of man on nature. The star that falls on the springs of water is called Pelen Ὁ Ἄψιθτος, and it brings bitterness to the waters and makes them unfit for drinking.

Modern global environmental research predicts a shortage of drinking water in the coming centuries. According to a study by the World Health Organization, in 2017, 71% of the world's population had daily access to clean and uncontaminated drinking water, with a declining trend.²³ This is the result of

²¹ Perry, *Things having lives*, p. 112.

²² Jonathan C. Augustine, “Environmental Justice and Eschatology in Revelation“ in *Loyola Law Review*, 58 (2021), p. 325-348, p. 336.

²³ “Drinking-water”, World Health Organisation, Google, Last modified June 14, 2019. <https://www.who.int/>, accessed 14. 06. 2019.

the harmful impact of heavy and purpose-built industry on rivers and springs, and precipitation, the correctness of which is endangered by massive gas vapors. The section on the four trumpets in itself imposes itself subject to the ecological method of interpretation. Revelation speaks very affirmatively about nature, bringing it into equality with man, precisely the soul, the common factor of humans and animals. The plant world Revelation does not view it on the same level as animals and humans, which it describes as having souls, but it clearly indicates the dependence of human existence on nature.²⁴ On the other hand, no part of Revelation emphasizes human rule over nature as good. In the further text of Revelation, in the section on Babylon and the New Jerusalem, human rule over the world is presented as seen by the advocates of environmental protection: as repressive and exploitative over the rest of creation.

4.3. Rev 18, 1-19; 21, 11-17 - Babylon and the New Jerusalem as a depiction of man's relationship to creation

The passage on Babylon from Rev. 18: 1-19 brings a perfect allegory of human disobedience to nature. In the section, an angel shows John the city of Babylon, which is portrayed as a lavish harlot. Babylon is the meeting place of all sin, immorality and fornication, human greed and desire for power. It is these facts that are sublimated in the motif of Babylon show the human impulses the Man's bad attitude towards creation is expressed by the motif of Babylon, which leads people to use the resources of the Earth for personal enrichment and to satisfy their own non-essential needs. The people who destroy the earth in Revelation are mentioned in Rev. 11:18: at lead to the destruction of both the human race and nature.

*The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”*

The term nations in the Greek original reads τὰ ἔθνη, people who are angry are those who do injustice to God's witnesses in the earlier course of Revelation 11.²⁵

The Lord rewards His dead servants by destroying the nations, those who corrupt the earth - τος διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν. The nations mentioned in Revelation are represented by the negative symbols in Rev. 11: 8 - Sodom and Egypt, the nations that killed God's witnesses.²⁶

²⁴ Perry, *Things having lives*, p. 114.

²⁵ Eliezer González, “The “Destroyers of the Earth” in Revelation 11,18 – Who are they?” *DavarLogos*, 14 (2015), p. 91-107, p. 95.

²⁶ González, *The Destroyers of the Earth*, p. 96.

The motifs of Babylon, Sodom and Egypt can be viewed through ecological interpretation as negative symbols of developed civilizations that do not care in their progress, both for eternal salvation and for the Earth's ecosystem. The description of the fall of Babylon is the best presentation of the essence of the negative attitude of entire nations towards creation. Those who lament the fall of the great city are in order:

- kings and rulers of the earth; in Rev. 18: 9-10, kings are represented whose relationship with Babylon is described as fornication. They represent world governments that, for the sake of their personal sinful desires, mourn the lost civilization, not caring about the damage it has done to God's creation.

-trader; trade is portrayed in Revelation in a distinctly negative light, beginning with Rev. 3:17, where trade in the coming centuries is made conditional on the worship of the Beast (global world powers). The merchants mourn Babylon for the income from the trade they lost, and the inability to cash in the exploited ore and other earthly goods.

-sailors and ship captains; this primarily refers to maritime trade, which in the ecological light can be interpreted negatively, because it implies the exploitation and appropriation of water surfaces for personal gain by states and individuals.

The specific metaphor of Babylon for the first recipients of Revelation represented the Roman Empire. Rome served as a timeless symbol of all the coming world superpowers with the moral values of its imperial culture and the destruction of both people and relief, caused by constant conquests. From the ecological aspect, Babylon (Rome) represents a human repressive attitude towards everything created.²⁷ In the modern context of the ecological crisis, the city of Babylon serves as an indication of the bad motives of world governments. By hinting at the end of the world and the judgment of Christ, they should be made aware that their attitude towards creation conditions their future existential and eschatological well-being, which can only be achieved through a careful attitude towards creation.²⁸ Contrary to the motif of Babylon as a current, but also future image of the world governments' attitude towards creation, Revelation offers an ecological solution by presenting the motif of the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is presented as a city of perfect dimensions and great beauty, which the Lord brings down to earth. Ecological exegesis interprets the New Jerusalem as a new creation of God, a human potential realized in this world.

For the first recipients of Revelation, the New Jerusalem is a paradigm for Babylon precisely by comparing the moral values represented by Rome and the messages of the Gospel.²⁹

²⁷ Augustine, *Environmental Justice*, p. 339.

²⁸ González, *The Destroyers of the Earth*, p. 94.

²⁹ John E. Stanley, “The New Creation as a people and city in Revelation 21:1-22:5: An alternative do despair”, in *The Asbury Theological Journal* 60 (2005), no 2. p. 25-38, p. 28.

Rome is portrayed as negative because of the specific life context in which Revelation was written. The repression of Rome towards the Church in Asia Minor caused the bad attitude of Rome towards Christians to be reflected in the repressive attitude of the Roman Empire towards the conquered territories.³⁰ The New Jerusalem is what people can do with creation if they change their attitude towards nature. The fact that the New Jerusalem descends from heaven to earth unequivocally gives people hope that they can make paradise on earth. Modern society, pressed by the decay of ecosystems, is looking for a message of hope, a picture of a potential solution to the problem. The Church should insist on the concept of the New Jerusalem as its contribution to global environmental dialogue. Contrary to the gloomy reality which, from a scientific and socio-cultural aspect, does not offer a solution to the problem, the New Jerusalem offers a picture of an arranged place to live, a cherished creation that provides people with a place of the presence of God Christ. The kingdom of God is presented as realistically possible on earth.

5. Summary

- Book of Revelation contains some major points of ideal relation of man towards Creation. Writer of the Book judges those who „destroy the Earth”.
- Ecological crisis and environmental issues of modern age are in close relation with men’s understanding of Scripture. By misjudging God’s planned role for man as ruler instead of a guardian of Earth, men did their best to rule over Creation, making it’s flora and fauna ill.
- Christian Churches must use their significant influence to press the issue of ecology in mainstream culture and politics. Revelation of John may become a stronghold over which Christian Churches will base their ecological sphere of influence, in relation with ecological hermeneutics as base point of spreading ecological issues in global occurrences.

6. Conclusion

Revelation of John is an underutilized ecological potential for modern society. The Christian Churches can use their influence on world affairs to deepen the awareness of global opinion on environmental protection. The Revelation of John offers the possibility of a critical consideration of the relationship of modern man to the ecosystem of the Earth, on an individual and global level. The message of hope and the motive of the New Jerusalem is a picture of the potential of people to renew the Earth on which they live, to which they are existentially attached, as well as the one for them. Ecological exegesis uses the ecological hermeneutic method of interpretation in order to place the sections of Revelation in the service of actualizing the message of revelation in the present day. The anthropocentricity of Scripture, the emphasis

³⁰ Stanley, *The New Creation*, p. 28.

on man as the created ruler of the world, must adapt to modern environmental challenges, not deviating from the original timeless message of Scripture. Modern man must become aware of his responsibility to the rest of creation. He must use his role as the manager of the creation in order to protect and restore the creation, because he will identify with the creation when the real events of the end of the world occur. Together with animate and inanimate nature, man will praise the Lamb the Christ, in whom God, man and nature are united in eternal existence.

The problem of diminished ecological consciousness of people must be solved by the direct intervention of the Christian Churches, which must take on the role of the manager of creation. The Church must stand out by emphasizing the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Tradition as affirmative towards the preservation of the environment, and be committed to a concrete solution to the problem. Ecological awareness must be emphasized in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, first of all on the level of the individual, through the religious community, all the way to the common attitude of Christians about the faithful preservation and real application of the ecological message of Revelation.