



## RETHINKING EPHESIANS 1:10 THROUGH THE ECO-PHILOSOPHICAL LENS

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### Abstract

*This paper analyses Ephesians 1:10 from an eco-philosophical perspective that examines the implications of environmental ethics and humanity's part in creation. The approach used in the research is qualitative, based on biblical exegesis and theology in discourse with environmental philosophy concerning the relationship of creation and human obligation. It analyses human dominion, stewardship, ecological ethics, and the consequences of human action on the habitat. The reinterpretation of Ephesians 1:10 selected for this paper was done without the context of salvation; therefore, the paper asserts that there needs to be a broader scope of salvation theology that incorporates ecological restoration as part of God's redemptive work. It is suggested that faith-based communities, decision-makers, and individual citizens need to adopt unsustainable ways of living to fit into the proposed eschatological vision of unity.*

**Keywords:** Ecological ethics, Dominion, Ephesians 1:10, Ecophilosophical, Creation Theology

### Introduction

The natural world embodies a beauty and order that has long been inspired by awe and reverence. From the oceans and mountains to the delicate ecosystems where each living thing is in its proper place, creation testifies to an underlying interconnectedness. In numerous religious traditions, including Christianity, nature is regarded as a testament to divine wisdom and purpose. The biblical creation narrative presents a world that was originally in harmony, and balance has been disrupted. Human activities such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change have led to environmental degradation, threatening the stability of ecosystems and the survival of countless species.

The environment narrates a story of rich beauty and order that has always instilled amazement and fear. From mountains to oceans and fragile ecosystems where every single living organism plays its role, there is a profound unity that is displayed. It is unarguable that creation portrays the purpose of divinity. This sentiment is shared across multiple religions and cultures, including Christianity. The biblical account of creation describes a realm in which the flora, fauna, and human beings existed in a state of equilibrium. Unfortunately, this is not the case today. Human activities such as deforestation, pollution, and even climate change has resulted in the degradation of the environment. This affects not only the stability of the complex web of life but also poses a threat to the survival of various species.



Different fields are being called to respond to these crises. It is not surprising that Christianity talks about restoration and renewal, but its interpretations have focused on the redemption of human beings rather than considering the greater creation. This leads to another question: Does the Bible speak to the issue of caring for the environment in the context of faith?

Ephesians 1:10 states: To bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. While this verse is often interpreted in the reconciliation of all creation through Christ, most attempts have focused more on human salvation, often overlooking its ecological significance. A broader reading suggests that divinity extends beyond humanity to the rest of the natural world, reinforcing the idea that creation is valuable and that nature is also a part of God's redemptive plan.

N.T. Wright (2013) mentions that Paul's idea of reconciliation is profoundly holistic, even the Theologians. Jürgen Moltmann (1993) argued in *God in Creation* that a Christian's Gnostic critique of God is something that needs to be dealt with in the scope of Christian eschatology, which does not only concern itself with life after death but also with the renewal of the earth. Even with these implications, many neglect the remaining context of the environment to which this passage pertains. Interpreting the Bible through the lens of environmental philosophy permits a wider understanding of Ephesians 1:10, which resonates with modern concerns about the health of our planet.

As Arne Naess (1973) and Rolston III (1988) point out, nature has intrinsic value, which contradicts the anthropocentric worldview that has heavily dominated much of Christian thought. This paper uses such perspectives to analyse how Pauline theology can help expand the interpretation of Ephesians 1:10 to support a theological framework for environmental ethics.

### **The Creation Accounts**

Over the years, many religious traditions and cultures have viewed creation as a reflective behaviour that existed within a certain order. There have been attempts to depict the world as a properly organised system with beauty in each of its parts. Unfortunately, such harmony has been interrupted through time as humans have over-exercised expansionistic endeavours. As a result, there has been environmental destruction, depletion of resources, and other ecological emergency situations. Given these acute problems, it is reasonable to craft a proper theological response, especially when dealing with specific biblical passages regarding the unity and the goals of creation itself.

To understand the full theological implications of creation's unification, the primary narratives of creation need to be studied.

According to the Judeo-Christian worldview, it all begins with the Book of Genesis, where the events of creation are elaborated in detail and sequential order.

The foundation of the Judeo-Christian belief is the 'Book of Genesis', which portrays a systematic account of creation that is divided into several steps.

The creation narrative found in the Book of Genesis in the Judeo-Christian culture states that there is a step-by-step process of creation which concludes with the creation of human beings who possess the "dominion" over other living forms (Genesis 1:26-28). This verse, as well as the idea "dominion" itself, has been understood in many ways, impacting Christian thoughts. In the past, some attempts at "dominion" have been seen as a form of license for exploitation, thereby greatly harming the environment.



According to Lynn White Jr. (1967), this anthropocentric reading has developed an exploitive attitude towards nature, which has resulted in a paradox of man in nature. Pope Francis' Treatise 'Laudato Si' by Pope Francis, for instance, advocates an "ecological conversion" from attitudes and practices that it termed building a common home of humanity to an attitude and practices to sustain the construction of the common house. This lays both a theological and humanitarian responsibility on every human being to respect the environment. This position corresponds to the belief that human beings are guardians of God's creation and are responsible for protecting it. Ephesians 1:10 presents the idea of a design framework "to bring unity to all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on the earth" (Ephesians 1:10).

This cosmological reconciliation implies that creation itself has intrinsic value and is a part of God's restorative work, thus making the case for environmental care stronger. The theologian, N.T Wright (2006) draws attention to the cosmos being renewed by Christ, which means to emphasize the need of the cosmos, stressing the religious essence of nature.

Although creation culture is profoundly established on Judeo-Christian civilization, Philosophical debate carries significant nuances towards man's nature and its ethical connection, sometimes putting ecocentric and anthropocentric perspectives against one another. Normative consideration in anthropocentrism posits humans at the top, viewing nonhuman nature as instruments for humans' well-being. This standpoint has served throughout history as a rationalization for devastation to the environment, as pointed out by environmental ethicist J. Baird Callicott (1989), who states that anthropocentrism is at the core of most ecological trouble cases.

On the contrary, ecocentrism believes that all living and inanimate entities in the environment have value and civic virtue ethics, which means that every person is responsible for something greater than themselves. This argument is captured in what Aldo Leopold (1949) refers to as "land ethic," where ecologies are thought to be communities including human beings with a moral obligation to care for them.

It is Ephesians 1:10 that gratefully addresses the connection between the uniting of all things in Christ and ecocentric ethics, indicating a ready-made integration in existence. Jürgen Moltmann (1993), a theologian, points out that this unification makes available God's unreserved dedication to the whole creation, which calls for an ethic that endeavours to foster and maintain ecological health and balance. Furthermore, creation has benefited from scientific investigation of the start of the universe through cosmology and evolutionary biology.

From its origin to its structure, cosmology studies the universe's inception, which goes back to an estimated 13.8 billion years according to the Big Bang theory (Hawking, 1988). This paradigm shows an ever-changing cosmos, which motivates people and creates a sense of responsibility towards the environment. As put by Darwin (1859), evolutionary biology describes the variety of life from the perspective of natural selection. In this aspect, all species are connected, which points out the consequences of human action on the ecological systems. Creation can be understood through scientific explanations as well as theological accounts, even if these two differ from one another.

Ephesians 1:10 describes how science and faith can make an impact on the environment by portraying cosmic unity of the eco structures, which allows us to gain multiple views. Such integrations are justified by physicist and theologian John Polkinghorne (2002), who notes that reflections on creation will be deepened by scientific knowledge of the structure of the universe.



### **Creation Narratives in Various Religions and their Environmental Implications**

These differences in religions come with diverse practices and ethics towards the environment. In Hinduism, the universe is created, preserved, and destroyed unendingly. It describes nature in such a way that people are respectful towards all life forms because everything is a part of the divine (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 8). According to Chapple (1998), an expression of care towards the environment is presented through the principle of ahimsa (non-violence) to indicate harmony with all living beings.

Nagarjuna (2nd century) provides a good example of Buddhist focus on interdependence through *pratītyasamutpāda*, which states that all phenomena originate in relation to each other. This principle cultivates an attitude of mindfulness as well as compassion towards the environment through the promotion of practices geared towards the reduction of harm and enhancement of balance (Kaza, 2000).

As set out in Qur'an 2:30, Islam believes that Allah created the universe, and humans were appointed as stewards (*khalifah*) of the earth. Stewardship comes with a moral responsibility of caring for the environment as a reflection of the divine trust (Nasr, 1996).

Ephesians 1:10 contains the theological concept of an all-encompassing purpose when it states that God intends “to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.” While many have viewed this verse regarding salvation or the end of the world, its ecological implications are profound as well. If all of creation is to be united under Christ, then the natural world has value in the very act of God’s redemption. This understanding not only calls for an eco-justice interpretation of dominion in Genesis, but it also demands that humans exercise care for the natural world in addition to restoration and justice.

As Moltmann (1993) argues, the creation itself is also part of the salvation of humankind, not just a stage where a drama is being acted out. He posits that the “cosmic Christ” of Ephesians 1:10 redeems the whole universe—both humanity and the rest of creation. His view fits with an ecological theology that recognizes the greatness of creation in relation to humans and the duty to protect it.

Like N. T. Wright (2006), he reasons that Ephesians 1:10 is proclaiming that the work of Christ is not profoundly relevant to human souls alone, but rather goes deeper into reclaiming the whole universe. As he observes, there were Christians who, instead of imagining a complete abandonment of creation, wanted to hope for its renewal, and were also raised to new life. (Romans 8:19-23). This is coherent with an ecological ethics framework, which recognizes participation in God’s redemptive work through sustainable practices, conservation, and restoration.

From the philosophy of ethics perspective, deep ecology as presented by Arne Naess (1973) is consistent with this idea. Deep ecology believes in equality between all living things and rejects the perceived dominance of humanity over nature. When Ephesians 1:10 proposes unity of all things in Christ, it equally supports the deep ecological proposition for an ethical system that pays regard to and protects creation.

Besides, the stewardship model put forth by religious scholars such as Calvin B. DeWitt (1994) argues that, rather than exploiters of nature, humans are guardians of creation. This interpretation considers Ephesians 1:10 as a call to responsible custodianship of creation, through which Christians are



encouraged to sustainably live, act on climate change, and restore the ecology as an expression of faith.

### **Exposition of Ephesians 1:10**

Ephesians 1:10 outlines a goal of divine purpose and order when it states that, “God is working out everything in agreement with the counsel of His will.” This is integral in Paul’s theology of the idea of God striving to bring all aspects of life together into one through Christ for the redemption of creation. Even though numerous accounts attempted to explain these, focusing primarily on spiritual deliverance and eschatological comprehension, a deeper analysis shows the extent to which these focus on the relation of man, society, and the world creation.

The Apostle Paul, who wrote to the Ephesians, had a concern for unity, an idea that flows in all of his letters. Paul uses the word “anakephalaiōsasthai,” which means “sum up” or “bring together under one head.” This, as Bruce (1984) argues, implies that God’s plan is not merely “all things brought together” but an arrangement that seeks to restore and restructure something that is broken. This summation, according to scholars like Bruce (1984) and Wright (1996), is not only theological but transforms reality; that is, integration is what sustains the world.

Historically, most Christian scholars have believed that this verse refers to the reconciliation of humans and God through Christ. This interpretation corresponds with Paul’s wider teachings on salvation in which humans benefit from Christ’s atoning sacrifice, through which they are saved from sin and brought back to a proper relationship with God. Early Church Fathers, among them Irenaeus, conspired this idea with the recapitulation theory, which posits that Christ, as the Second Adam, redeems what the first Adam destroyed (Irenaeus 1885/1999).

Nevertheless, the wording of Ephesians 1:10 surpasses humankind’s redemption and hints at the possibility of a more cosmic one. The expression “all things in heaven and on earth” denotes a reconciliation which is not restricted to mankind alone but covers all creation (Bauckham, 2001).

Barth (1956) claims that all redemption aimed at human souls must be in continuity with all else in the cosmos and complements the other Pauline redemptive declarations in which he said at Colossians 1:20, ‘God through Christ, is reconciling to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven.

Ephesians 1:10 has an eschatological side that is important to note in the first place. Numerous researchers, particularly Bauckham (2001), note how Paul predicts a future point in time where history is summed up and everything is restored under Christ’s rule. This reminds one of the Jewish notion of tikkun olam, meaning “repairing the world”. In their philosophy, history is moving towards some sort of ideal restoration and Paul, influenced by his Jewish background, depicts Christ as the pointer through whom this restoration takes place.

In theology, this verse captures the notion of God’s sovereignty since it pertains to God’s will not being suppressed by sin or disorder, but rather leading towards resolution. This was clear with Augustine, who wrote about how God’s providence guarantees the realization of plans set by God (Augustine, 1998). This is also the case in the way Aquinas described the realization of this unity as part of God’s wisdom, where everything turns in order to the divine (Aquinas, 1947).

From the philosophical viewpoint, the idea of the unity presented in Ephesians 1:10 resembles the unity of Platonism and Aristotelianism with the concepts of harmony and teleology. In *Timaeus*, Plato depicts how the universe appears to be a structured whole created and ruled by divine reason (Plato, 2008).



According to Aristotle, everything has a purpose toward which it is moving (Aristotle, 1999). Paul's vision of believers' unity under Christ also looks like a theological analogy for seeing history and creation progressing towards their intended divine order.

Ephesians 1:10 goes against the inclination towards dualism, which tends to consider the physical and spiritual realms as distinct. Earlier Christianity, most notably in the Gnostic sects, had a tendency to regard the material sphere as rotten and inferior to the spiritual one (Bruce, 1984). However, the claim that all things are to be united in Christ gives the impression of a non-dualistic reality, which profound Eastern Orthodox thought teaches. In this communion, salvation is understood not primarily as escaping from the world, but rather as transforming and redeeming the world (Bauckham, 2001).

Aristotle's final cause suggests that everything moves toward an ultimate purpose (Aristotle, 1999). Paul's vision of unity under Christ can be seen as a theological parallel, where history and creation move toward their intended fulfilment in divine order.

Furthermore, Ephesians 1:10 challenges dualistic tendencies that often separate the physical from the spiritual. In early Christian thought, particularly in Gnostic sects, there was a tendency to view the material world as corrupt and inferior to the spiritual realm (Bruce, 1984).

However, Paul's assertion that all things are brought under Christ suggests an integrated rather than divided reality. This aligns with the holistic worldview seen in Eastern Orthodox theology, where salvation is not just about escaping the world but transforming and redeeming it (Bauckham, 2001). Finally, Ephesians 1:10 offers a view of unity and restoration that is profound in scope. It works within the boundaries of individual salvation to prompt us towards a greater inclusive paradigm of all creation within a single narrative of reconciliation. This verse deepens our understanding of holistic interpretations of faith, history, and even existence. When we place Ephesians 1:10 in such broad contexts, it offers numerous possibilities for its inclusiveness concerning community, ethics, and humanity's role in creation and deepens understanding of its many impacts.

### **Humanity's Role in Creation: Dominion, Stewardship, and Interconnectedness**

From the dawn of civilization, humanity's relationship with nature has been central to philosophical, religious, and ethical thought. Many traditions hold that humans possess a unique role within creation, whether as rulers, caretakers, or integral parts of a vast ecological system. The biblical account, particularly Genesis 1:26-28, introduces the idea of human dominion over the earth, a concept that has been interpreted in diverse ways. While some have understood dominion as control and exploitation, others see it as a call to responsible stewardship. In light of contemporary environmental challenges, it is necessary to critically evaluate these perspectives and consider how interconnectedness with the natural world informs humanity's ethical responsibilities.

#### **Dominion: Authority or Exploitation?**

The notion of dominion is first illustrated in the Bible's Genesis 1:26-28, which describes humans as having the right over all living beings. The Hebrew word *radah*, translated in English as "have dominion," has had its meaning interpreted differently over time. Some experts suggest that *radah* suggests power and rule, meaning humans have been given complete power over nature (Barr, 1972). This perspective has often been used to rationalize the reckless use of resources, which remain unsustainable as they are centered around humans instead of nature (White, 1967).



Lynn White Jr. (1967), in his “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis, emphasises the fact that the Judeo-Christian view, most especially the anthropocentric view of Genesis, has facilitated the decline of the environment. He claims that the focus on dominion has resulted in nature being unreasonably viewed as only existing for human use. This viewpoint conforms with the longstanding belief that expanding industrialization, enormous deforestation, and heavy consumption have been accepted because humans have the so-called divine entitlement to rule the earth. Not all scholars support White, arguing that dominion is not perceived as uncontrolled destruction but as control and authority with responsibility.

According to Schaeffer (1970), dominion in biblical terms must be grasped in the context of servant leadership, which presumes care for creation as the proper application of authority. This view fits with ecological ethics that support anthropocentric sustainable development, realizing that people’s welfare is intertwined with the state of the environment (Horrell, 2010).

Besides the previously given definition of dominion, there is another one, which is a bit softer, that is stewardship. This implies that humans are not owners but caretakers of the earth. This also finds support within biblical theology, especially in the contexts of Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” This verse suggests that God is the ultimate owner of creation, while humans are put in charge to govern it prudently.

Stewardship is clearly defended by theologians like John B. Cobb Jr., who, in 1992, argued that taking care of the ecology is a matter of Christian obligation. He claims this because stewardship stems from a shift in understanding dominion from controlling to caring and preserving. This is in line with Aldo Leopold’s (1949) Land Ethic, which argues that humans are to regard themselves as part of the ecological community rather than its rulers.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis (2015) mentions the stewardship model when changing history through a more integrative social ecology approach, where social justice is subsumed beneath care for the environment. He criticises consumerism and the abuse of technology, suggesting that people need to adopt a culture of care. This view coincides with numerous indigenous perspectives in which the land is sacred, and human obligation transcends economic or pragmatic considerations (Deloria, 1999).

The stewardship model also finds its support in Islam and Judaism. In Islam, the idea of khalifah (stewardship) features prominently in environmental ethics. The Qur’an (6:165) claims that people are the vicegerents on earth, imbued with responsibility for their well-being. Likewise, Jewish teachings make sure *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) is mentioned to describe good and responsible behaviour towards creation (Tirosh-Samuelson, 2002). This comes from a shared Islamic Judaism worldview that conceives human life as not self-sufficient but rather interdependent with the environment.

There has been a shift in thinking that moves from dominion and stewardship to one emphasising interconnection. This perspective considers humanity as deeply rooted within nature instead of outside it. Such a view promotes an ecological philosophy that criticises the dualistic view of thought that has always set humans above the rest of creation’s life (Naess, 1989).

Deep ecology is another movement founded by Arne Naess (1973), which vehemently opposes the idea of human domination at the expense of ecology. Naess supports the idea of biospheric egalitarianism, where all forms of life are acknowledged as having inherent worth. This perspective



touches on Eastern philosophies like Buddhism and Daoism that focus on the idea of living in harmony with nature. In Buddhist philosophy, the idea of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) denies individualistic autonomy from the rest of creation, which is a hallmark of Western-infused environmentalism (Loy, 2010).

Another example of interdependence-supporting principles can be found among Indigenous peoples, where nature is recognized as a living being and not an external resource. The perspective of “all my relations” (Mitakuye Oyasin) of the Ojibwe people highlights this philosophy, where the well-being of people is intricately connected to the land, animal, and water systems (Cajete, 2000). In much the same way, traditional African religions see the natural world as precious and relational, with ethical responsibilities to ensure a balance between people and the world (Magesa, 1997), noting that no single religion has ownership of the world’s environment.

This synthesised view affirms the anti-human-centric presumption in most Western cultures and suggests that it is time for an updated notion of what part humanity should play in the context of creation. In the words of Pope John Paul II, “Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person also extends to the rest of creation,” which means that social and environmental concern cannot be limited to the preservation of nature and people; instead, the value of animals and plants as living beings equally demands attention.

### **Linking Environmental Ethics and Religion**

As more and more of the world’s environment becomes critical, so too must religion’s conception of a person’s role in creation evolve and cater to modern demands. For some time, dominion has been used to rationalise the destruction of nature, while care has been a more responsible way of addressing the problem, stressing the need to foster and protect nature. Even so, the philosophy of ecology perceived in its wholeness rather than its individual parts is essential in redefining the connection between humans and nature.

Certain Christian theologians, for example, H. Paul Santmire (1985), claim that there is a need to develop not only biblically-based but also eco-friendly theology. According to Santmire, the focus must shift from people to God’s loving relationship with the world and the role of humans ought to be subordinated.

Theistic and ecological conflicts will persist as long as creation is contested. While some interpretations of dominion appropriately justified human rule without question, the case for stewardship as a model portrays the responsibility to care for creation as an alternative to selfish domination, which is much more appealing. However, there is more to humanity’s place within creation than stewardship, and that is the citizenship and interconnected vision. This goes beyond the more favoured idea of caring for nature having a profoundly positive ecological effect on the environment and leans instead on the principle of nurture, which, in reality, is more of a religious and ethical claim.

These theories allow us to reinterpret God’s creation and achieve a more integrated and responsible stewardship that corresponds with the divine concept of oneness, as articulated in Ephesians 1:10.

### **Environmental Ethics and Theological Perspectives**

Over the years, one’s environment has been profoundly impacted by religion, ethics and philosophy at large. Engaging with and tackling the challenging question of how to best interact with the natural



world remains highly important for theology and environmental ethics. Religious practices tend to give certain moral pointers towards creation, while an ethical point of view provides a systematic order for caring about nature. This part analyses the gap between theology and environmental ethics by focusing on the obligations arising from various theological traditions and ethical attitudes towards the environment.

A good proportion of people have always relied on religious worldviews to determine how to interact with the environment. Many Indigenous cultures ascribe to the belief that nature is divine, and humans are part of a unified living system. These values parallel modern ecological ethics, which stress the importance of balance and harmony in the relationship between humans and nature (Callicott, 1994). Much separating humans from nature interpretation of Western religious traditions, especially those under the influence of Christianity, tends to sustain an antagonistic and hostile relation with the environment.

Lynn White Jr. (1967) gave the most important critique of nature and Western Christianity's attitude to it, saying that the ecopolitical collapse is thoroughly rooted in Western Christianity. He argues that the idea of human 'dominion' from the Bible (Genesis 1:26-28) fostered a worldview that is ultimately anthropocentric, which leads to the reckless exploitation of the environment.

According to White, the movement from an animistic, nature-worshipping culture to a dominion theology resulted in the degradation of the ecosystems. This criticism created a huge stir across different religious and ecological debates and made people question how the Bible defined the act of creation.

In relation to White's critique, a variety of different explanations regarding biblical accounts of creation have arisen that approach the subject from a less extreme angle. Pope Francis (2015), in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, argues that the Christian tradition does not encourage destroying the environment but instead advocates for greater care and responsibility towards it. He defines 'integral ecology', which suggests that environmental issues cannot be separated from social or ethical issues. This position accepts the stewardship model of environmental ethics, which views the Book of Genesis as a call to care for the environment instead of abusing it.

The stewardship ethic stems from the foundation that human beings are God's stewards over the creation. Scripture like Psalm 24:1 ("The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof") makes it clear that God is the sole owner of nature with no further claim from humanity. Richard Bauckham (2010) claims that dominion refers to exercising authority not as domination, but rather as engaging in God's work of preservation, where humanity acts as a responsible guardian of nature.

This model of stewardship has become widely accepted among scholars who support the idea of protecting nature in Christian morality. Instead of stewardship, some scholars suggest a kinship model of environmental ethics. This viewpoint holds that humanity is a part of creation as opposed to being externally separated from it.

Norman Wirzba (2015) argues that some biblical texts, especially found in the Psalms and prophetic literature, give the vision of a creation where all beings: humans, animals, and ecosystems, are in mutual relationship.

This corresponds with some ecocentric positions in environmental ethics, which ascribe value to all forms of life irrespective of their usefulness to human beings. Christianity is not the only religion that



has values concerning environmental ethics. Numerous religious traditions endorse ecological care as a virtue. In Islam, the notion of khalifah (stewardship) suggests that people are caretakers of the earth in the name of Allah (Nasr, 1996). Islamic teachings advocate for people to practice sustainability, conservation, and ethical use of resources. In the same way, Hinduism and Buddhism focus on the oneness of existence.

Hindu scriptures speak of the world in the form of a mother (Bhumi) who must be honoured and nurtured and for Buddhism, schools of thought preach the principle of non-violence (ahimsa). This reinforces the stance that religious traditions pragmatically establish ethics for the protection of nature.

In green ethics, there has been an allocation into deep ecology, eco-theology, and ecological sustainability ethics, which is required for further understanding systematic social philosophy (Berry, 1999; Naess, 1973). This eco-philosophy movement opposes humanism and self-centeredness by calling out for an extreme change in how humans must view themselves in relation to the biosphere. Eco-theology, by definition, aims to combine theological reasoning with the knowledge of ecology, giving reinterpretation of sacred writings that ensure as well as establish pity towards the planet.

In Christian ethical theology, the most significant question is how the so-called doctrine of creation care views environmental stewardship as an act of worship and submission to God. In H. Paul Santmire's (1985) analysis, rather than worrying about destruction, Christian eschatology should be viewed as the renewing of creation. This thought agrees with Romans 8:19-22, where creation is said to be yearning to be set free.

The interplay between environmental ethics and theology indicates that there is a need for an updated approach to theology. The case for ecologic justice is not only a matter of ethics; it is also a matter of faith. There is a need for Christian theologians and ethicists involved in addressing environmental issues to reimagine theologies aimed at promoting sustainability, justice, and care for creation.

Finally, the merging of environmental ethics and theology reveals the deep connection between humans and nature; it is our moral obligation to life. Be it stewardship, kinship, or eco-theology, every religion and culture seeks to respond to the environmental crisis within its own set of ethical and moral traditions. A narrow understanding of scripture paired with interfaith dialogue and some philosophy opens doors to a more meaningful conception of environmental responsibility that fits the biblical idea of shalom(peace) and restoration.

### **Ephesians 1:10 Through the Eco-Philosophical Lens**

From reverence to exploitation, humanity has always had a mixed relationship with nature. Ancient civilizations viewed nature as sacred; however, modern advancement of technology and industry took a heavy toll on the environment. Activities such as deforestation, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and climate change are just a few of the many consequences of human actions. The unregulated consumption of natural resources for economic profit has led to the alarming extinction of biodiversity, with scientists suggesting that we are currently in the middle of the sixth mass extinction in human history (Ceballos et al., 2015). The once boundless and untouchable oceans are now facing overfishing, increasing acidification because of carbon emissions, and pollution from plastic waste. Indigenous communities and wildlife biodiversity now face danger as the lungs of the Earth are destroyed at an unsustainable rate.



Creation is described in the Bible as tranquil, well-arranged, purposeful, and beautiful. The book of Genesis describes God saying the creation was ‘good,’ reinforcing everything being in its ideal shape before any human interaction. Contrastingly, rising sea levels, severe climate disasters, and desertification are just a few ways climate change expresses itself and demonstrates the environmentally deranged world we live in. These phenomena profoundly affect the poorest parts of the world more than others.

The outcome of these unchecked exploitations greatly differs from what is presented within Ephesians 1:10, which states how God intends to ‘bring together all of creation into one under Christ’. It has been the case that this line is viewed within the framework of salvation, focusing more on how humanity reconciles with God. But looking deeper into the lines through an eco-philosophical lens offers a different analysis; it means healing is offered to creation itself. The oneness referred to in Ephesians 1:10 is not one that is merely human, but a cosmic one. This means that with the heavy menace on the environment, there seems to be no hope for environmental healing as part of God's redemptive plan.

### **Ephesians 1:10 and the Call for Ecological Restoration**

Eco-philosophy addresses the human-centric approaches to scriptural interpretation that subordinate the rest of creation to the dominion of humans. It advocates for a more holistic perspective in which nature is valuable in its own right. So, shifting the meaning of Ephesians 1:10 in this direction acknowledges that ecological restoration is part of Christ’s unifying work. This is consistent with the general thought of Paul, and especially with Romans 8:19-22, in which creation is then described as ‘groaning’ to be redeemed. The fall not only broke the bond between man and God, but it also affected creation, as we see the world suffering from natural catastrophes, sickness, and imbalance.

In light of environmental theology, the work of reconciliation requires healing the earth. The biblical understanding of shalom, or peace, harmony, and wholeness, offers such understanding. If the fullness of God’s plan is the restoration of all things, human activity in relation to the environment needs rather an alignment with divine purposes. There is, however, a need to shift from a dominion-centred theology that has justified the destruction of nature to a stewardship and citizenship theology that places emphasis on responsibility and care.

To implement the vision of oneness captured in Ephesians 1:10, action is necessary on the individual and community, as well as institutional levels. Faith groups should incorporate care for creation into the doctrine and practice of the faith as a basic moral and spiritual obligation. There needs to be an understanding that care for the environment is part of the will of God and, therefore, sermons, theological education, and community projects should address this need. Several indigenous, as well as non-Western, religious traditions have a worldview that recognises and respects nature and can serve as helpful resources for Christian theology. There is also a need for collaboration among theologians, environmental scientists, and governmental authorities. Science has evidence of climate change, pollution, and loss of biodiversity, and theology offers the ethics and response.

Similarly, the policy enactment and economic strategies must change to include sustainability. The damage caused to the environment by businesses and governments must be addressed and policies that focus on the preservation of nature and the creation of renewable resources must be promoted. Because of their moral authority, religious institutions are also able to advocate for policies and demonstrate leadership through care for creation.



On a personal level, individuals are expected to live in a way that demonstrates honour towards God's creation. Behavioural change, such as waste reduction, prevention of carbon emission, ethical consumerism, and volunteer spirit, can help shift the responsibility of caring for the environment to the public. Theologians ought to stimulate ongoing discourse, allowing a re-reading of the Bible through the lens of nature.

On a personal level, individuals need to make lifestyle changes that show regard for creation. These include waste reduction, lower carbon footprints, ethical consumerism, and volunteering in local conservation programs. This can create a culture of ecological responsibility. Theological discourse ought to keep on broadening and reinterpreting the scriptures from an ecological angle as part of its progression.

An eco-philosophical view of Ephesians 1:10 gives believers the opportunity to care for the environment as part of their faith. The unification of all things under Christ not only provides salvation but also a hand in restoring a shattered world. With this understanding, everyone and every community can ground themselves in becoming agents of creation's restoration and the redeeming purpose of God.

### Conclusion

Looking at Ephesians 1:10 from an eco-philosophical viewpoint suggests that, as God looks to bring everything together, restoration of the environment is central to achieving that unity. The present ecological crisis, characterised by exploitation and degradation, reveals the need to transition from dominion-centric theology to stewardship, which appreciates creation's inherent value. Scientists, lawmakers, and faith leaders all need to work together to develop sustainable systems. Through responsible practices, humanity can take an active role in the healing process of the environment, which achieves the sacred goal of restoring all creation to harmony.

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