The Divine Devastation of the Earth’s Environment
Revelation 8:1-13

We have learned about the seven sealed scrolls in the hand of Father-God who is seated on His throne in heaven; the only one worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals is the Lamb who was slain—Jesus Christ; one by one He breaks the seals and unfolds the events of the great Tribulation, also known as the Day of the Lord; the first four seals were the four horsemen of the apocalypse—the Antichrist riding a white horse of false peace, then he rides the red horse of war, then the black horse of famine, and finally the pale horse of death.

When the Lamb opens the fifth seal, there are martyrs under the altar in heaven who have come out of the great Tribulation that are pleading with God to bring vengeance on those who are killing the saints; then, when the Lamb breaks open the sixth seal, there are cosmic disturbances on the earth: great earthquakes, stars falling out the sky, the sun darkening and the moon turning a blood red.

Now we come to the seventh seal and what we find in chapter 8 is the divine devastation of the earth’s ecology; whatever has happened up to this point is mild compared to what comes out of the seventh seal.

The Breaking of the Seventh Seal (8:1-6)

_The silence in heaven... “When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about a half an hour” (8:1); Silence suggests the lull before the storm; when God is silent and demands silence it means He is angry; the prophet Zechariah wrote: “Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!” (Zechariah 2:13); God loves noise -- joyful noise, loud singing; the scene in heaven has been very noisy; the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures, the heavenly hosts are singing praises to_
Him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb; there are the sounds of harps, the noise of thunder; there have been praying martyrs under the altar; there has been a lot of noisy praise in heaven.

But when the Lamb breaks the seventh seal and it is unrolled for all to see there is temporary silence in heaven; what they see and hear is so startling all of heaven is silenced.

*The summoning of seven angels with seven trumpets...* “And I saw seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets” (8:2); these angels are unnamed, but interestingly, in Jewish writings known as the Apocrypha, written around 165 BC, seven angels are named: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Sarakiel, Gabriel, Phanuel (Tobit 12:15); whether these are the angels we do not know, but outside of Michael and Lucifer, who became Satan, there are no other angels who are named in divine or Jewish secular literature.

Notice the position of these angels; “who stand before God;” since their creation, this specific group of angels have been worshipping God; these are not any angels but a unique group of angels; when the angel Gabriel came to Zechariah to inform him that his wife Elizabeth was pregnant with a son who will be called John, the angel identified himself, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God...” (Luke 1:19); it could well be that Gabriel was one of those seven angels, and was so identified with the seven angels in the Apocrypha.

Each angel is given a trumpet; trumpets were an important musical instrument in biblical times; they were sounded to declare war, to assemble the people, to announce great celebrations, to introduce kings, and to call attention to Almighty God; in the book of Revelation trumpets were primarily used to announce judgment.

*The supplication of another angel before the altar of incense...* “Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with all the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand” (8:3-4).
In heaven is the altar of incense, which symbolized the prayers of the people (Psalm 141:2); a copy of the altar that was in the tabernacle and the temple (Hebrews 9:23,24).

This angel was playing the role of the priests under the Mosaic Law; in those days, the priest would go to the brazen altar, where the animals were sacrificed; he would have in his had a tong which he used to pick up the fiery coals from the altar; he would then transport the hot coals to the altar of incense which was in the holy place in front of the curtain which separated the holy place from the holy of holies; he would pour on the hot coals incense causing the smoke and smell of that incense to rise to the nostrils of God; this symbolized the prayers of the people; this the priest would do twice a day, once in the morning and again in the evening.

The angel in heaven has a golden censer filled with much incense and he is to offer it on the altar which was before the throne; that incense too represents the prayers of all the martyred saints, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth” (6:10); they were told, not yet; rather “they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” (6:11). A specific number had to die before God would take vengeance.

_The storms from divine fire thrown upon the earth from the altar..._ “Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” (8:5-6). Here you have the angel taking the censer filled with fire mixed with the incense and hurling it to the earth; that censer was linked to the prayers of the martyrs.

You think prayers are powerful? It is in response to the prayers of the saints in heaven that God will hear and judgment will fall; the prayers of the saints became like fiery comets that strike the earth; there followed peals of thunder, flashes of lightning and an earthquake; evidently, the number of martyrs necessary for God to strike the earth with vengeance has been completed; the seven angels are all lined up with trumpets in hand ready to sound; the trumpet judgments are ready to begin.
The Blowing of the First Four Trumpets (8:7-13)

The punishment from four trumpets (8:7-12)...

1. The first trumpet...“The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up” (8:7); Hail, fire, blood are all signs of judgment; in the seventh plague God struck Egypt with hail mingled with fire and the entire land was devastated (Exodus 9:18-26); the hail and fire destroyed all the crops and livestock; when this plague strikes the earth during the Tribulation a third of all trees, vegetation, and grass will be burned up.

2. The second trumpet... “Then the second angel sounded: And something like a giant mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed” (8:8-9); the text does not say that a giant mountain was thrown in the sea, but “something like a giant mountain;” could it be a giant meteor, like a giant mountain that falls out of the sky destroying one third of sea life? Remember, too, that one of the plagues of Egypt was that the river Nile turned to blood and the fish died (Exodus 7:19-21; Psalm 105:29); first, one-third of all vegetation is struck, now one-third of sea life is struck.

3. The third trumpet... “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. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters become wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was bitter” (8:10-11); a deadly meteor sweeps through the sky and as it approaches the earth it sweeps along the surface and turns one-third of the water on the earth into deadly liquid; it affects rivers, springs and wells; man’s drinking water is poisoned and tastes like wormwood; wormwood is a general name for a class of plants that are bitter to the taste; these plants are not really poisonous in the sense of being fatal; Moses wrote that wormwood was the fruit of idolatry (Deuteronomy 29:17-18); it was the threat of God through Jeremiah to give His people wormwood to eat, and the water of gall to drink (Jeremiah 9:14,15; 23:15); the bitterness of wormwood always stood for the bitterness of God on the disobedient; first vegetation is struck, then the sea, and then the waters.
4. The fourth trumpet.... “Then the fourth angel sounded: and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine and likewise the night.” (8:12); here is a partial eclipse of the sun, the moon and the stars; can’t you image a convention of scientists trying to figure out what is happening on the earth? Much of the vegetation on the earth has burned up; life in the sea is dying; the drinking water has been poisoned and bitter to the taste and now the lights in the heavens are reduced by a third; this is temporary for in chapter 16:8-9; the heat from the sun is so hot that it burns mankind with its fierce heat.

So for a time the sun is dimmed by a third and the earth cools down, then later God initiates His own global warming and the sun makes man so miserably hot that they are burnt as though by fire.

All aspects of the earth are affected by the first four trumpet judgments— the vegetation, the sea life, the rivers and springs, and now the heavens.

*The pronouncement of a flying angel...* “And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!’” (8:13); then, an angel flies through the midst of the heavens shouting that God is not finished bringing His judgments on the earth; the worst is yet to come; the angel announces with three woes; “Woe, woe woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound.”

All of this because of sin; the first four trumpets are unimaginable, but nothing like what is to come; when God’s vengeance comes everyone will know it; God has been patient through thousands of years of human sin, but the day will come when He will forcefully deal with it.

One commentator wrote: “Though sentence against an evil work be not executed speedily, it will be executed at last. Jezebel may flourish in her iniquities for many years, but finally the horses trample her body and the dogs gnaw and crunch her royal bones. Long was the world left to drive its crimes, jeer at Noah, fling defiance in the face of God, but soon the earth breaks down beneath their feet and their lifeless bodies are dashed upon each other amid the waves of a world ocean. The trampled law of God will
assert its rightful honor and Christ will not endure the smittings, taunts and wrongs of Pilate’s hall forever. And when these trumpets once give their blast, the vibration will run through the universe and everything created for human blessedness shall turn into a source of disaster to them who know not God and obey not the gospel of Christ.”

**The Blasts of a Nuclear Devastation?**

A prophecy teacher whom I greatly respect, Dr. David Reagan, founder of Lamb and Lion Ministries out of McKinney, Texas sees Revelation 8 as a first century man’s description of a nuclear holocaust; one third of all vegetation and sea life is burned up, and one third of the earth’s waters are polluted; next, one third of the light of the sun, moon, and stars is blocked out; the darkening of the sky is exactly what would happen in a nuclear holocaust because so much debris would be sucked up in the atmosphere by explosions; the dense cloud that would be produced would cause temperatures to plummet below freezing around the world, causing many people to freeze to death; and that same cloud would be carrying nuclear radiation, which is probably the reason we are told in Revelation 16:2 that by the end of the Tribulation people’s bodies will be covered with sores that will not heal.

While most commentators see the first four trumpet judgments as supernatural acts of God, and that may well be the case, says Dr. Reagan, he argues that there are times when God pours out His wrath by relaxing His restraints and using human behavior to destroy themselves; he sites Romans 1:18-32 to prove his point; there, Paul teaches when society rebels against God and refuses to repent, the Lord then steps back and allows evil to run its course; you may recall that section of Romans 1 which says on three occasions that “God gave them up to their uncleanness and the lusts of their hearts” and “God gave them over to a debased mind;” it is like God saying, “I don’t need to send My judgments on you when your actions bring judgment upon yourself;” God is allowing sinful man to self destruct; could that be the case with these four trumpet judgments?

I’m not so sure I agree with Dr. Reagan at that point, but what he writes about God letting man self destruct by his sinful and non-repentant behavior, is to me a very profound thought.
The Bankruptcy of Mother Nature and the Earth Worshippers

Praying to Mother Nature... We saw when the sixth seal was opened that there were cosmic disturbances; there was a great earthquake, the sun became black as sackcloth, then the moon became like blood, the stars fell to the earth like ripened figs falling from trees when shaken by the wind; and what did the kings of the earth, the rich the poor, the slave and free do? They prayed to the mountains and the rocks crying, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (6:12-17).

The people were praying to Mother Nature to hide them or to kill them so they would not have to face the wrath of God; make no mistake, we are living in a time when more people are worshipping the creation rather than the Creator; Earth Day and the earth-god, Mother Gaia have become very popular worldwide; people are marching with signs that read “Save Planet Earth.”

I read about a funeral held at the First Parish Unitarian Church in Brookline, Massachusetts officiated by the Reverend David Johnson; the deceased was surrounded by burning candles and fragrant flowers; the deceased was a 100 year old tree that stood at the edge of the church property.

The branches of the tree hang too close to a school construction site adjacent to the church property; city officials felt the branches would pose a danger to the children and wanted the tree removed; a 19 month legal battle ensued and in the end the courageous tree lost the fight; so church members gather to pay homage to the tree.

When my late wife and I were on a tour in Europe, a young lady traveling with us wanted me to hug a tree: “It will make you feel better just to wrap your arms around a tree and give it a good hug;” so I did; she then replied: “Don’t you feel more in touch with Mother Nature?” “No!” was my answer: “I don’t worship the creation, but the Creator.”

Sunday, April 22, is Earth Day and for 48 years our nation sets aside this day to remember Mother Earth as the giver of life; Pat Buchanan, speaking of the state of our nation said, “We now live in a nation that has outlawed prayer in our schools, removed the Ten Commandments, but sets aside a day to worship dirt.”
Certainly it is our responsibility to care for God’s creation; He put us in charge of the earth and we should all be good environmentalists—wanting clean air, pure water in our lakes and streams; we should preserve our natural resources and recycle what we can (Genesis 1:26).

However, being good stewards of the environment and being part of the environmental agenda are two different things entirely.

The plan of the environmentalists... The environmentalists agenda was clearly set at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro; the Summit opened with the participants from all over the world kneeling to pray to Mother Earth in a circle drawn on the ground which is a common Satanic ritual; they then established their mission statement:

1. To reshape world governments of the world into a New World Order... According to Lester Brown of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and head of the Watchworld Institute, the goal of the New World Order is, “Building an environmentally sustainable future which would involve reconstructing the global economy, dramatically changing human reproductive behavior, and becoming more concerned with environmental security than military security.” In other words, create an environmental crisis with the need to save planet earth and you will have the nations of the world shelving their nuclear arms and joining to form a one world government.

2. To reduce world population... Since the United States consumes more natural resources than any other nation UNCED set a population limit on our nation of 75 million; what do we do with the other 225 million people already here? That is anybody’s guess but abortion, sterilization, euthanasia must be legal as well as taking a hard look at China’s two children per family along with the possibility of legalizing female genocide; recently Chip and Joanna Gaines of the popular Fixer Upper TV show announced that this was their last season because they were having their fifth child and family has to take precedence; the Gains were highly chastised on Facebook and Twitter by environmentalists for bringing another child into the world.

3. To redistribute the world’s wealth... Industrialized nations like the United States will have to give some of its wealth to poorer third world
nations so that eventually they can economically be on par with us; it is an attempt to eliminate worldwide poverty; the poverty of third world nations is spiritual and not economical; if a nation is going to be blessed it will be from the Lord, not from other industrialized nations; the psalmist wrote, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Psalm 33:12).

_The power behind the environmentalist’s agenda..._ The goddess of environmentalism is Gaia, the Greek earth-goddess; Gaia is Mother Earth; she is the New Age darling of spiritual feminists, neo-pagans, political environmentalists and animal rights activists; she predates Christianity and her teaching is the earth is a living creature; the late Carl Sagan, a prominent New Age scientist and worshipper of the cosmos told a 1990 Global Forum in Moscow that the earth should be regarded as “sacred... not because God created it, but because she made us;” according to Sagan, Mother Earth is our creator and not God; didn’t Paul warn people about worshipping the creation rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

_The preaching of environmentalists..._ The worship of Gaia is part of the New Spirituality known as monism, “all is one” and pantheism, “all is god;” everything in the universe is part of a common force that relates us to each other; it makes us one with the universe and one with god; because we as humans are one with all things, Gaia worshippers argue against any special status for humanity; Ralph Metzner, a New Age activist said, “Humanity has a reckless regard for the delicately balanced interrelationships of the whole system. The notion that human beings are intrinsically more valuable than a tree or a bug is now construed as a form of bigotry. Instead, all organisms are seen as vitally interrelated, and all plants and animals are said to have the right to survive.”

Congratulations! You are now related to a stink bug and have the same rights as a geranium!

_Science Magazine_ in 1967 published an article by historian Lynn White in which she called Christianity “the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen... Such ideas as human domination, and the belief that our destiny is with a transcending god and not Earth, has encouraged a destructive use of creation.” Now we are being blamed for trashing Mother Earth!
The problem for the environmentalists... Let’s get back to our text; let’s suppose the destruction on the earth from the sounding of the first four trumpets was not a nuclear explosion, but one by one, God Himself is destroying one third of the earth—from vegetation, to the water supply, and then darkening the sun by a third, cooling the planet to the point that many people die.

Can you imagine the ecologists of the world getting together in conference trying to figure out what is going on? Global warming has got out of hand—but then why has the sun dimmed and people are freezing to death? They most likely will never conclude that it is God who controls the weather, not man and not Mother Earth; they most likely will not conclude that what is happening to the earth is the judgment of God on a planet of people who have come to believe that their only salvation is to pray to Mother Earth to save them from the God who created the earth and all things therein.

A day is coming when God will deal with the religious environmentalist; living on earth at that time will be a miserable experience; He is going to curse the earth’s vegetation, curse the earth’s seas, curse the rivers and water supplies and then curse the heavens so that the lights from heaven are reduced by a third, causing millions of people to freeze to death; Gaia is helpless to do anything about it; I am just glad that when the trumpet judgments begin to blow, I am out of here, aren’t you? Amen!