

Week Five: The Meaning and Means of Salvation, Part #2

Creation, regeneration and salvation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Genesis 1:1-5

Uniqueness of God

- The infinite and transcendent personal God (Deuteronomy 32:40; 33:27; Isaiah 40:28)

No genealogy, consort, or origin story for God. He stands alone outside of creation, speaking it into existence as *transcendent Sovereign*.

Bara, to create, to put in order, to arrange. Speaks to completeness, perfection, and purpose. Used only of God (Job 10:9; Isaiah 45:9; Jeremiah 18:6). Creation reflects God’s *goodness*—note the assessment of each creative day.

Merisms are statements of opposites indicating totality. All of creation is *finite* and *contingent* on God

- Creation is an act of *hesed*, loving-kindness

He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast... Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance. Psalm 33:5,12

Humans as God’s image-bearers and blessed

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Genesis 1:26-28

- Human dignity under the blessing of God

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet... O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!

Psalm 8:3-6,9

- A place for humanity in the cosmos

Subject of God's blessing and charged with a stewardship

Creation as salvation: central purpose of the Genesis narrative

- Creation and polemic: Yahweh is supreme (Joshua 24:14; Ezekiel 20:16; 23:1-21)

What Genesis One is undertaking and accomplishing is a radical and sweeping affirmation of monotheism vis-a-vis polytheism, syncretism, and idolatry. Each day of creation... dismisses an additional cluster of deities... On the first day, the gods of light and darkness are dismissed. On the second day, the gods of sky and sea. On the third day, earth gods and gods of vegetation. On the fourth day, sun, moon, and star gods. The fifth and sixth days take away any associations with divinity from the animal kingdom. And finally human existence, too, is emptied of any intrinsic divinity—while at the same time all human beings, from the greatest to the least, and not just pharaohs, kings and heroes, are granted a divine likeness and mediation.

H. Conrad Hyer, cited in Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 177

Genesis is written to a people steeped in but fleeing from polytheism. The Old Testament has numerous references to creation/anti-creation deities worshipped by Israel's neighbors. Note references to Yam, Leviathan, Rahab etc. In this sense, the creation narrative and texts that comment on it are analogous to the victory of Yahweh over the gods of the Egyptians in the exodus.

- Conditions before the word of creation (Genesis 1:2)

Creation account is selective and presumes *already existing* judgment

For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it; He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited)

Isaiah 45:18

I looked on the earth, and behold, it was formless and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.
Jeremiah 4:23

“Darkness,” “formless and void” indicate a situation of judgment, emptiness, nothingness (see Isaiah 24:10; 40:17; 41:29; 34:10; Deuteronomy 32:10; Job 6:18; 26:7; Jeremiah 4:23; 1 Samuel 12:21; Ps.

107:10-12; 139:7-12).

- Cosmos from chaos

I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God... I am the Lord, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these. Drip down, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down righteousness; let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, and righteousness spring up with it. I, the Lord, have created it. Isaiah 45:8

Formless Overcome

Void Overcome

Day One: Light

Day Four: Luminaries

Day Two: Water and Sky

Day Five: Fish and Birds

Day Three: Land and Vegetation

Day Six: Beasts and Humans

Day Seven: Sabbath

- The Spirit and creation (Genesis 1:2)

God's Spirit is consistently connected with life, giving life, restoring life, new life.

Postscript to creation: Sabbath rest and blessing

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. Genesis 2:1-3

- The meaning of Sabbath

Instructively, this day is represented—surely intentionally—as having no evening or night. God's rest is conceptualized as having no darkness, a negative theological symbol for oppression and death. On that day the horrific primordial chaos is banished forever. In other words, by resting on the Sabbath, Israel experiences the world to come, a world of untarnished blessing that they are destined to inherit on the "day of the Lord."

Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 187

Most of all, the rest of the Sabbath day stands out against the dark silence of the primordial void. Between the stillness of the prologue and the calm of the epilogue there is a world of difference. The first silence precedes time, the second sanctifies it.

Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 9

Human dilemma and a hint of future salvation: Genesis 2, 3

The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; for from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” Genesis 2:16,17

The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall burse him on the heel.”.... To Adam He said... “Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return..”

Genesis 3:14,15,17-19

- The fall and the meaning of salvation

The problem is death rooted in the power of sin, which is failing to obey God’s word (1 Cor. 15:56)

A reason for hope in Genesis 3

A promised “seed” of the woman

Removal from the garden

God’s care for man in the fallen state

Repeated declarations of creation blessing

Creation theology and the hope of salvation

- Salvation from darkness and death

There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in misery and chains, because they rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High. Therefore He humbled their heart with labor; they stumbled and there was none to help. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He saved them out of their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and broke their bands apart.

Psalms 107:10-14

“No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory. Your sun will no longer set, nor will your moon wane; for you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be over. Isaiah 60:19,20

Salvation reverses the fall in a regeneration of the spirit

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Psalm 51:10,11

- Israel as a paradigm of creation/redemption salvation

Thus says the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, “For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and will bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.” Isaiah 43:14,15

But now, thus says the Lord your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love you”... Isaiah 43:1-4a

Abraham: reversing the curse through land, fertility, and the restoration of blessing

Hope in exile: life from death in “dry bones” (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

- Regeneration in the Spirit is coming

God’s New Covenant

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit with you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes. Ezekiel 36:26,27

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant I made with their fathers, in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them” declares the Lord. “But this covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them., “ declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

“I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My

soul.” Jeremiah 32:40,41

- The coming day of salvation *for all nations* when death is defeated

The Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine. And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over the nations. He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. And it will be said in the day, “Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.” Isaiah 25:6-9 (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

- Earth, creation and new creation

Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness. Isaiah 65:17,18

Creation and salvation in Christ—creation motif spills over into the New Testament

- Jesus the creator and owner of all

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. John 1:1-5

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17

- Jesus as the “new Adam”

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned... Adam is a type of Him who was to come... So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so thorough one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:12,14,18 (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:21,22)

Salvation is a “new creation,” not some patch job on the old:

If any one is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 2 Corinthians 5:17

“You must be...

“born again” (John 3:3,7); “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5,6).

- Regeneration: Spirit and life. See also 2 Cor. 4:6; 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:23; 5:8; Col. 1:12,13; 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:9

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Romans 8:18-23

When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deed which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. Titus 3:4-6

- Sabbath for God’s people

Sabbath is about *rest* (Genesis 2:5; Exodus 31:15; Leviticus 25:4)

From completed work, a time of enjoyment

Promised *land* is Israel’s rest (Deuteronomy 3:20; Jeremiah 46:27)

Life under God’s provision and protection—blessing

Disobedience to God means not entering His rest (Psalm 95:7-11), an enduring picture warning against unbelief.

This principle relates to receiving Christ and not returning to Temple sacrifice (Hebrews 3:7—4:10).

Salvation is God’s rest (Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:1-11).

Conclusion of history: Eden revisited

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea (lit. deep). And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes;

and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; for first things have passed away (Revelation 21:1-4)... And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Revelation 21:10,22; cf. Jeremiah 3:16,17)... Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it... and there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign for ever and ever. Revelation 22:1-5

Kingdom: God's Reign and Salvation

The rule of God and His kingdom

- Promise to David (2 Samuel 7:8-17; 18-29)

He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever. In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David. 2 Samuel 7:13-17

Eternal kingdom (see 2 Sam. 23:5; Ps. 89:28, 29...)

Jerusalem is both the “city of David” (2 Sam. 5:7,9) and the God’s dwelling (1 Kings 11:13; 14:21) and the place from which God rules (Micah 4:1—5)

God’s kingdom and David’s kingdom are one (see 1 Chron. 28:5; 2 Kings 19:34; 20:6)

Unique father/son relationship (see Psalm 2:6-8; 89:26,27)

The Lord says to my Lord; “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.” (see Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:29-36)

Charter for the nations

Then David the king went in and sat before the Lord, and he said, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? Any yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord God, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the torah of man, O Lord God. 2 Samuel 7:18,19

And it will come about in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established

as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, “come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, their He may teach us about his ways and that we may walk in His paths.”... Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. Micah 4:1-4 (cf. Isaiah 2:4)

My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations. Isaiah 56:7

King Messiah

- David and the messianic motif

David as the expected messianic ruler

My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have on shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. They will live on the land I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons’ sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. Ezekiel 37:24,25

- From “seed” to “Branch”

Seed promise and the drama of historical narrative

Genesis 3:15, 5:29, 9:26; 12:3 (cf. Galatians 3:6), 49:6

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this His name by which He will be called, ‘The Lord our righteousness.’” Jeremiah 23:5,6 (cf. 33:15; Isaiah 11:1)

- The divine king

“But as for you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings for are from long ago, for the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2

A child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. Isaiah 9:6,7

- The priest—king

The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” Psalm 110:4 (cf. Genesis 14:19; Hebrews 7:1-25)

Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.”

Zechariah 6:12,13

“Behold, My Servant (*Targum*, the Messiah) will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of man. Thus, He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand.” ... By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?... The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering... By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant (*Targum*, the Messiah), will justify the many, and He will bear their sins.” Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:10,11

Messiah as both the priest to the nations and the sacrifice!

Kingdom of God, Messiah, and the New Testament

- Jesus is the awaited Davidic King

Genealogy, birth place (Matthew 1:1, 20; 2:1; John 7:41,42)

He said to them, “How is it that they say the Christ is David’s son? For David himself says in the Psalms, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’ Therefore David calls Him ‘Lord,’ and how is He his son?”

Luke 20:41-44

Offers his life as a sacrifice as messianic priest

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for the many.”
Matthew 20:28 (cf. 1 Timothy 2:6)

- Kingdom: the presence of the future

Blessings of the kingdom now:

Enter the kingdom (Mt. 25:34; 46)

Kingdom is a gift (Lk. 12:32) to be sought and received (Mt. 7:7; 13:44—46; 6:33) of salvation (Mk. 10:17—30)

Entering into eternal life (Mt. 25:46; Mk. 9:43) or the “joy of the Lord” (Mt. 25:21,23)

Resurrection (Lk. 20:34—36; Mt. 12:24—27)

Evils purged (Mt. 25:34,46)

Restoration of fellowship with God (Mt. 13:30; Mk. 4:29; Lk. 22:30; Mt. 8:12,12; Mt. 22:1—14; 25:1—12)

- Promise of kingdom future and the “day of the Lord”

Immediately after the tribulation of those days, “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky,” and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the “Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky” with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to another.”

Matthew 24:29-31 (Joel 2:10; Isaiah13:10)

Kingdom of God and the “day of the Lord”