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Genesis 2:1-3: Biblical Theology of Creation Covenant

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Genesis 2:1-3 looks back to the work of the six days with tremendous satisfaction. Verse 2:4a sums up the section, making the count of the words 'create' and 'make' (*bara'*, *'asah*) seven times each in the episode Gen. 1:1-2:3. This indicates the wholeness and completion of creation and the interrelationship of Gen. 1 and Gen. 2:13. Gen. 2:1, with its information that in this fashion the heavens and the earth were completed (*wayekullu*), operates as a bridge signifying the end of the creation account and the opening of the narrative up to the account of Gen. 2.

In Gen. 2:2-3 the narrator informs us God had completed (*wayekal*) his work, and he had brought all (*mikkol*) his work to completion. In a *Commentary on Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1944), U. Cassuto observes that the verb *kalah* in Genesis and Exodus, when referring to completed acts, indicates that the action already stands terminated. God is now in the condition of one who had completed all his work. The LXX, Peshitta and Jubilees 2, aware of the difficulty the account affords for a seven day interventionary work of creation, read the sixth day in v. 2. They correctly recognize that the divine acts of creation had ceased with the work of the sixth day. The tight interrelationship of the first six days from which the seventh is excluded by form, content and subsequently chapter division, provides a contrast of activity and purpose between Gen. 1 and Gen.

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2:1-3. The distinctive presentation of the seventh day is in quite different terms from the previous six days, which had been interrelated either by chronology or by literary relationship in terms of day one to four, day two to five, day three to six.

Genesis 2:1-3 presents a pattern of seven lines rising to a crescendo in 3a, with 3b emphasizing, as a closure, the matter of 2b, 3b: God had ceased from his work. The seventh day is mentioned three times (v. 2 twice, v. 3 once), each time in a sequence of seven words. Gen. 2:2-3 then combines the creation account of Gen. 1 with a 'Sabbath' in a seven day scheme. It is clear that though the noun *sabbaton* 'Sabbath' does not occur, the verb *shabat* is used twice in 2:1-3, making a major function of the account. This is the basis for the later observance of the Sabbath. *Shabat* basically means 'stop' or 'cease'. Sometimes it is translated as 'keep Sabbath', which is its derived meaning later in the Old Testament. The verb occurs some 73 times in the Old Testament, and is generally used of persons. The idea of physical rest or desisting from work is not primary in any of the basic usages.

Completion or perfection, in the sense of bringing a project to its designed goal, is implicit in the meaning of this verb; it is also explicit in terms of the prominence given to the seventh day as completing the creation sequence and giving point to it. The idea of blessing and hallowing the day, and of endowing it with the potential to fulfil its purpose in the divine plan (especially setting it apart as a holy day) is, as Gordon Wenham notes, without parallel, since blessing is normally restricted to animate beings. The seventh day thus acquires the special status as a day that belongs to God alone. The seventh day of creation seems the day which recognizes the significance of what has been completed, and capitalizes on that aspect. When act (Gen. 1) and purpose (Gen. 2) are put together, then we get a complete sequence, a creation week.

The total account of Gen. 2:1-3 clearly seems to invite creation in general and humanity in particular to keep Sabbath. Most remarkable of all is that, unlike the previous six days, the seventh day is without beginning and end. The intention of the narrative seems to be to underline the distinctly special and unending place of the seventh day, thus advancing the context in which historical happenings yet to come will occur. The idea of a creation rest for the creating deity is commonly found in many of the creation texts of the ancient world. However, as we might expect, the notion of this rest as the item which gives meaning to the account of creation and explains the ongoing purpose for which creation exists, is peculiar to the Old Testament.

Following Gen 2:1-3, Gen. 2:4a serves as the introduction to the first *toledoth* narrative, Gen. 2:4b-4:26. Then Gen. 2:5-7 introduces what follows in 2:8-17 by detailing the provision of rain and a cultivator before the Eden narrative, which requires both, is presented. The unending Sabbath day provides the

context in which the ideal life of the garden is to take place and is to be perpetuated in human experience. Since this note of divine purpose for creation precedes the human Fall, it will clearly continue beyond it. Point here is given by Heb. 4:9-11, which tells us that there still remains a Sabbath rest (Gk. *sabbatismos*) for the people of God. What remains to be experienced is not the Sabbath as such, which on the evidence of Gen. 2 and the assumption of Heb. 4, is continuing, and whose character of life in communication with the divine is always a possibility for humanity. Instead, what remains is the 'rest' associated with the Sabbath, at least in its complete sense. Heb. 4:9-11 endorses the continuing Sabbath but indicates that there are dimensions of the meaning of the Sabbath day which have continued to elude human experience. God's own rest is the divine endorsement of creation and his final intention to emerge from this beginning. It indicates his willingness to enter into fellowship with humanity.

The Garden and the Fall

Genesis 2:8-25 indicates the context and the nature of the fellowship which God and humanity were to share. It is, however, the paradox of revelation that humanity, created to enter into and enjoy the immediacy of the divine presence of which the Sabbath of Gen. 2:1-3 speaks, would, by the Fall, forfeit it. Gen. 2:4-3:24 recounts the sorry tale of paradise gained and lost. The Hebrew syntax of Gen. 2:8 makes the point that Adam was formed outside the garden, abstracted from the world at large and placed within the garden. Verses 9-17 explicate the implications of v. 8, with vv. 9-14 dealing with the nature of the garden (cf. 8a) and 15-17 specifying the placement of humanity within the garden with the mandate to work it and take care of it (cf. 8b).

The Garden as Separated from its World

We turn first to the characteristics of the garden. We may notice in this connection the inference contained in the Hebrew word *gan* 'garden.' It refers to a fenced off enclosure, particularly of a garden protected by a wall or a hedge. Walls, such as those surrounding royal gardens, are mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament (2 Kgs. 25:4; Jer. 39:4; 52:7; Neh. 3:15). Also, Eden is a valued, fertile, well-watered place which is constantly cared for. In the case of Gen. 2, this is reinforced by the Greek Old Testament translation of the Hebrew *gan* by the Greek *paradeisos*, frp, the Hebrew *pardes*, itself a Persian loan word. The Persian original has the basic sense of 'what is walled, what is hedged about' and is thus a 'pleasure garden surrounded by a stone or earthen wall'. The Latin Vulgate translated the phrase 'garden of Eden' by *paradises voluptatis*, 'a delightful paradise'.

The existence of parks and gardens as special places in the ancient Near East outside of Israel is abundantly clear from Mesopotamian literature. Kings planted and boasted of extravagant gardens. The notion

of the monarch as a gardener for the deity is also found in the ancient Near East. In view of the royal connotation contained in the notion of 'image' in Gen. 1:26, this role of Adam in Gen. 2 as 'gardener' is further instructive. Egyptian literature and art likewise describe gardens as places of love and happiness.

All of this shows the garden as a special place which is spatially separated from its outside world, a world presumably very much like our own. The differentiation of Eden by division from its world is a notion further advanced by Gen. 3:24, where the cherubim with flaming swords guard the way to the tree of life. Thus, in Gen. 2a, we have a localized Eden differentiated from a world outside, presumably very like the world of our own experience, a world which needs to be brought under the dominion of the divine rule for which Eden is a model. At the end of the canon, however, when history has run its course and a new universe super-intervenes, the end (the new creation) is presented not only in terms of a new Jerusalem (a new covenant whose benefits are now fully accessible), a kingdom of God (whose rule is now fully understood and demonstrated), and a new Temple (in which the contours of the new creation is presented as a holy of holies), but lastly and most significantly as a new and universalized Eden (Rev. 22:1-5).

The Garden as a Sanctuary: Dominion in the Garden and Adam as Priest

The description of the garden in Gen. 2:8a, 9-14 contains many of the motifs describing divine habitations in the ancient Near East. Creation accounts from the ancient world commonly connect creation and the building of a temple or palace. In these mythical, ancient world structures, built in the very centre of the earth and so controlling it, stood the sacred mountain where the deity of the national fortunes presided, and where one could have contact with him. Also at this sacred site, the victory which brought creation into being, was won and celebrated. In the ancient Near East, particularly, the sacred mountain was the meeting place of heaven and earth where celestial glory and mundane reality met. There the gods assembled in council, presided over by the principal deity (*Anu/El*). From this palace, decrees regulating creation were promulgated. It is also frequently thought that a sacred stream whose water teems with supernatural significance issues from the cosmic mountain.

It was also believed that the upper and lower waters of the cosmos met where heaven and earth and the nether world were connected. Sanctuaries and temples were constructed at these places so that communication between the human and the divine worlds might take place. In Mesopotamia, the temple itself could represent the cosmic mountain. The fashioning of just such a temple is narrated in the *Enuma Elish* after

Marduk's victory over the chaos figure, Tiamat, and after Marduk's recognition by the lesser deities of the pantheon. A temple tower (*ziggurat*) was built in the temple precinct, and on the top of such a tower, which was conceived of as the cosmic mountain on which the deity descended, the deity was believed to reside on earth. In Canaan, the home of the presiding deity, *El*, was at the point where the double deeps (the upper and lower waters) met. Apart from such general background, the presence of God in Eden points to its character as a sanctuary or sacred space.

The garden, as we might expect of this divine centre, is the source of fertility, for the great rivers take issue from the stream which rises in the garden. There are hints in Gen. 3:22, perhaps, of the ancient world council of heaven held at this source (a motif taken up strongly by later Israelite prophecy) and where decrees are issued which affect the course of human relationships. Eden is thus presented as the *axis mundi*, the point from which the primal stream radiates to the four quarters (Gen. 2:10-14). In the very centre stood the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, indicating the source of life, and the manner by which life was to be conducted.

The garden of Eden in Gen. 2 is thus seen as a special sanctuary, a temple site, quite unlike the rest of the world. Indeed the creation narrative from Gen. 1:1-2:3 contains vestiges of ancient creation accounts in terms of threat to the deity (Gen. 1:2), combat (Gen. 1:2a), victory and the building of a temple. The placement of humankind as 'in the image' in the garden furthers the analogy of 'image' and temple association, drawing kingship and the temple motif together at the beginning of the Bible. Canaan is at times in the Old Testament not only paralleled to Eden (Is. 51:3, Ezek. 36:35), but is also fulsomely presented in Deuteronomy as something corresponding in the Israelite context with Eden (cf. Gen. 8: 7-10; 11:8-17). Canaan in its totality is therefore presented as divine space (cf. Ex. 15:17; Ps. 78:54), and the implication is that Eden is also considered divine space.

Ezekiel 28:1-10 is a passage which clearly bears upon Genesis 2. It portrays the king of Tyre as saying, 'I am *El*'. He is described as being in the seat of the gods and in the heart of the seas. This reinforces the allusion to *El*, whose dwelling place was at the springs of two rivers, midst the channels of the two deeps. The thrust of the oracle lies in the description of how *Yahweh* reveals the fallacy of the king's pride. In the further allusion of Ezek. 28:13-14, Eden is clearly conceived as a mountain sanctuary since 'mountain' occurs twice in the phrases 'holy mountain of God' (v. 14), and 'mountain of God' (v. 16). Ezekiel seems to have drawn upon a creation tradition common to both Ezekiel and the Genesis account, although not upon Genesis directly, since there are differences between Ezekiel and Genesis.

The mountain of God, for exam-

ple, is associated with holiness as opposed to profanity. Ezekiel is saying that even if the king of Tyre were in Eden, he would be cast out; even if he were full of beauty and wisdom he would still go; even if he were a cherub in God's most holy place, his sin would cause him to be expelled for profanity; fire would consume him and he would be no more. The feature common to Eden and the mountain of Ezek. 28 is that of holiness. Ezekiel's identification of Eden as a 'holy mountain of God' is confirmed by Genesis 2 where Eden, clearly elevated, is the source of living water for the world. We may also point to Ezek. 36:33-36, where the garden of Eden is the symbol of fertility and a fitting analogy for the land of Palestine about to be restored. Palestine as a whole is also conceived as a divine garden in Ezek. 47:l-l2.

The connections between Eden and the later Jerusalem temple are particularly strong. Wenham points out that the verbs 'cultivate' (*'abad*) and 'guard' (*shamar*) are elsewhere in the Old Testament translated as 'serving' and 'guarding' and in the tabernacle can be referred to as priestly service and guarding (Num. 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chr. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14; cf. also Is. 56:6). The only other time the Old Testament uses both verbs together is in connection with the Levitical service and guarding of the sanctuary (Num. 3:7-8; 8:25-26). *Targum Neofiti* Gen. 3:15 underscores the cultic notion by saying that Adam was placed in the garden to do service according to the law and to keep its commandments.

This is strikingly similar to the language of priestly supervision in the passages cited from Numbers and the *Targum* where two cherubim took over the responsibility of guarding the garden temple (cf. the verb used in Gen. 3:24). Later their role became memorialized in Israel's temple when God commanded Moses to make two statues of cherubim and station them on either side of the ark in the holy of holies. Moreover, in Ezekiel's new temple, the walls of the holy place are profusely engraved with garden emblems. The function of the cherubim as guardians of the divine sanctuary (Gen. 3:24) also reappears in the holy of holies in the Jerusalem Temple.

Eden was the garden of God and God's presence was the central aspect of the garden. That Eden is customarily understood in the later biblical narratives as the earthly centre where God was to be found is clear from Is. 51:3 where Eden and the garden of *Yahweh* are paralleled. Since God's presence is located there or is to be experienced there, the garden is sacred space just as the later temple in Israel was to be. Eden is the representation of what the world is to become That much becomes clear when, as indicated above, the New Jerusalem is presented in terms of the holy of holies of the Jerusalem temple (cf. Rev 21-22). We may also point to Ezek. 36:33-36 where the garden of Eden is the symbol of fertility and a fitting analogy for the land of Palestine about to be restored. Corresponding to and continuing the sanctuary note

which we have associated with the garden, the Jerusalem temple is the later world source of life-giving streams (Ezek. 47:1-12, cf. Joel 4:18).

Adam in the Garden

It is no surprise to find that the full tenor of Gen. 2:9-17 depicts what seems to have been a sanctuary situation in which Adam as priest/king offers worship in the sanctuary garden, the world centre of which is Eden. Verses 15-17 conclude the account by focusing on Adam. In the LXX reading of Ezekiel, it is noted that the adornments of the king of Tyre, likened to the original cherub in the garden (Ezek. 28:13), correspond fairly exactly to the precious stones set in the breastplate of the Israelite high priest (Exod 28:17-20). By all the implications, this gives to Adam, the original inhabitant of the garden, a pronounced priestly/kingly character. In Ezek. 28:11-19, the king of Tyre is represented as an Adamic figure, made clear by the location of the garden, the use of the Hebrew *bar'a*, the presence of the cherub and the idea of sin leading to expulsion.

The phrase 'mountain of God' is a standard Old Testament description for the Temple (cf. Ps. 48:1-3). Carole Newsom argues cogently that the king of Tyre is also presented as a priest in *Yahweh's* temple. The king's actions in the political realm are seen as a defilement of what is holy. The oracle in Ezek. 28 functions to assert the correct relationship between the king and *Yahweh*. The king is created by and subservient to *Yahweh*. If Gen. 1 emphasizes mankind's kingship, Genesis 2 gives a picture of a priestly role in the divine presence.

Adam's role in Eden raises the question of the relationship of Israel to Adam. The separateness of the garden and Adam's kingly/priestly role there are important for the later understanding of Israel's vocation in Canaan. Indeed, the analogies which can be drawn between Adam and Israel are significant for the subsequent course of biblical eschatology and mission. For Israel, like Adam is created outside the divine space to be occupied. (Note Gen. 2:8 where the force of the Hebrew tense is an English pluperfect: cf. NIV 'had planted'.) Adam, like Israel, is put into sacred space to exercise a kingly/priestly role (cf. Ex. 19:4-6). Israel, like Adam, is given laws by which the divine space is to be retained. Israel, like Adam, transgresses the law, and Israel, like Adam, is expelled from the granted divine space.

The point is that the placement of both Adam and Israel in divine space was conditional. The obedience of both parties to the divine mandate was required for the retention of the sacred space. Adam possessed an immortality that was limited and lapsable, just as Israel possessed a covenant which could be revoked under conditions of national disobedience.

It is very clear, furthermore, that the function of the creation account is to indicate to Israel the nature and purpose of her special responsibility to exercise dominion in her world, a

status which Adam once exercised. The movement from Adam to Israel will be accomplished by a series of divine selections and differentiations designed to bring Israel onto the world stage and to take place from the Cain narrative onwards. This series of divine movements will have as its result the conclusion of the Sinai covenant by God setting up a special relationship with Israel. The Sinai covenant will be designed to bring the world's nations into the sphere of the universal kingdom of God.

The final status of the saved will be as in Rev. 1:5-6; 5:10; 20:4-6, where believers are to be kings and priests unto God. The fulfilment of this expectation is met at Rev. 22:1-5, making it very clear that the function of the creation account is to further indicate to Israel the nature and purpose of her special responsibility to achieve dominion in her world, the same world which Adam had once occupied. The presentation in Ex. 19:5-6 of national Israel in a corporate, royal, priestly role continues the divine purpose for humanity expressed in the early Genesis narrative.

Genesis 2:15-17 thus describes the position of mankind before the Fall, existing in openness in the divine presence which was suggested in the presentation of the extended seventh day of Gen. 2:4a. By all this a picture is also presented of humankind's dominion over nature as king/priest. Moreover, paradoxically, humankind authorized to exercise dominion over the world (Gen. 1:28), exercises that dominion by worship and service in the divine presence. Service in the garden is denoted by the Hebrew verb *'abad*, the basic meaning of which is 'work' or 'serve'. In the context of Gen. 2:15, the meaning is 'till' or 'cultivate', but the regular use of the verb as 'worship' in the later Old Testament imports into Gen. 2 the further aspect of Adam's response in what seems to be this sanctuary, where the presence of God is directly experienced.

After the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden, they are described in relationship to the earth by the same verb (Gen. 3:23). Thus, we may take it that by this verb the very fundamental character of humankind's dominion over the earth is being depicted. Service, which is divine service, is thus the role of humans. They are firstly in submission to the Creator himself and then to the world, paralleling again the later way in which Israel nationally will be presented in Canaan. We may also refer to Mark 10:45 for a Christian analogy – the Son of Man who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

The note emphasized under *'abad* is sustained by the Hebrew *shamar*, 'keep', 'guard'. Other nuances of this verb include 'watching', 'obeying', retaining', 'observing. What this all means is that human dominion over the world consists of concern for the well-being of what is to be supervised. Paradoxically, the world outside the garden will be best served by humankind's service at the centre of the world in the presence of

God. The use of *'abad* indicates the nature of the attention devoted to the garden, in the consciousness of the presence of the Creator from whom the mandate has been derived. Perhaps there is also latent in the notion the watchfulness that needs to be exercised over against the serpent who will appear in Gen. 3.

The presence of spiritual disorder in the garden then speaks, as we know, of the choices which must be made in this initial Eden and the tensions of later human experience imported into history by human misuse of the divine gift of freedom. Since we know that the Eden of the end is without problems of this character, we may expect the intervening flow of history will point to the way in which the glorious end of history will finally be reached.

Finally, mankind was created outside of the garden and placed in it. In reporting this, the narrative makes the point that mankind was not native to the garden. It is *Yahweh*, who is also *Elohim*, who puts Adam and Eve in the garden and it is upon a relationship with *Yahweh Elohim* that their tenure of the garden depends. In biblical terms we may describe this as a movement of grace. We may take it that the occupation of Eden, whatever its description may be, will depend upon this grace factor.

We may sum up our remarks about the garden as follows: Gen. 2 displays, as a paradigm of the end but admittedly under ideal circumstances, the harmony of general orders that the dominion role was to secure for the world at large. The presence of Adam in Eden presages Israel's later role in her world. It presupposes that Adam's role, transferred to Israel and then to Christ, was to extend the contours of the garden to the whole world, since this is the transition that finally occurs in Rev. 22. At the same time, Gen. 2 indicates what dominion is and how it is to be exercised. Dominion is the service which takes its motivation from the ultimate human relationship with the Lord God on behalf of whom dominion is exercised. Since dominion is the mandate awarded to humanity in Gen. 1:26-28, their position in Eden indicates how dominion is to be exercised.

The Fall will deny to humankind the further possibility that Eden held out; that is, by the relationship in Gen. 2, they might develop and deepen that relationship by which life in God's presence would be retained. For humanity, as created, was endowed only with a lapsable immortality, but the biblical expectation has in mind an inheritance 'that can never perish, spoil or fade' (1 Peter 1:4). It is clear, then, that the immortality to which the Bible finally progresses will be an important advance for the people of God upon the relationship held by the first pair in the garden at the dawn of creation. This harmony of orders will be achieved only when the revelation of Rev. 21-22 becomes a reality. The tabernacle of God, God himself and the Lamb, is with people; the New Jerusalem (the New Eden and the end-time holy of holies) descends; when everything is most holy; and the kingdom of God is with us.

But the possibility existed, even within the garden, for people to exercise their God-given authority independently (Gen. 2:16-17). We know this will happen in Gen. 3 and that it will have disastrous results for the mandate and role of people. The other continuing issue that the Gen. 2 account raises for human experience in the light of the ongoing seventh day is the possibility of life in the divine presence beyond the Fall. The seventh day experience is presented as still possible in a fallen world in which now, beyond Eden, two ways to live are presented. As the account implies, although we are in a fallen world, faith in God's purposes can still bring us into an Eden-type human experience in this extended creation Sabbath where we experience the personal presence of God.

The Effects of the Fall: Mankind in the Outside World

We may mention, very briefly, that the consequences which ensue from disobedience in the garden are recorded in Gen. 3:14-19 in the successive curses which are laid upon the serpent, the woman and the man. These three are cursed in a manner which strikes at the essence of their basic relationship to each other and to their world. The serpent is to be humiliated, there will be the broken intimacy between man and woman, woman will experience the pangs of childbirth, and man is cursed in relationship to the ground.

Paul makes it clear that whatever the nature of this disruption of nature was, it was something that the advent of the new creation would remove (Rom. 8:18-23). This hoped-for restoration, therefore, becomes an ingredient in the biblical expectation for the end from the Fall onwards. This hope for the removal of the curse upon the ground is to some degree symbolically seen in Israel's gift of the promised land. It is a hope to which the mainly post-exilic doctrine of a new creation is later precisely addressed.

After the Fall, humanity will find that its effort to cultivate the ground and generally to relate to it will be painful and disappointing. But we need to ask: has the change occurred to humanity or in the environment or in both? It is normally suggested that the Fall has caused the ground to become unyielding. Thus a change has occurred both in humanity and in the environment. It seems preferable and in keeping with our argument to suggest that what is impaired as a result of the Fall is our control of the ground. In this connection the Hebrew phrase 'because of you' in Gen. 3:17 is ambiguous. The basic meaning of the Hebrew phrase 'for the sake of' has an inbuilt ambiguity, since it can mean 'on account of', 'for the benefit of', as well as 'because of'. The sense most suited to the context of Gen. 1-3 is 'because of', i.e. the ground yields a curse because of what will be humanity's inappropriate control of the ground in the future; the problem after the Fall is humanity's inability to rightly use the ground. The Fall had left people 'like God' i.e. with power to make decisions by which the course of life and the world could be controlled. But since people were

also unlike God, they did not have, as a result of the Fall, the ability to be sure that the decisions they took would be right in themselves, nor indeed the assurance that such decisions once taken would promote the right consequences. That is to say, as a result of the Fall, people then and now live in their world unable to exercise proper dominion over nature, contrary to what is seen in Gen. 2.

In environmental terms, it has been humanity's failure to serve the world, and thus to exercise dominion, which has resulted in the present spate of global problems with which we find ourselves confronted. We live out of harmony with nature and ourselves in a world in which testing difficulties abound. Unable to administer our God-given charge, our mismanagement and neglect and exploitation serve only to accentuate, to increase and sharpen the inbuilt problems of the natural world over which humanity was set as a steward.

Theology of Creation Covenant

Clearly Gen. 2 sets the basic course of biblical eschatology. We are entitled to ask, then, whether the theology which will direct the course of this eschatology is also to be found in Gen. 2. The parameters of the canon suggest that the eschatology that takes its rise in the presentation in Gen. 1-2 is of a provisional, contingent, limited creation in which a paradigm of the end is seen. The biblical movement takes us from creation and the Fall to the creation of Israel and her fall, to Christ as representative Israel to the new Israel in Christ putting in train Israel's mission to the new creation, and finally a full complement of the redeemed people of God who are kings and priests in the new creation. In Gen. 2 we find a preliminary picture of the end where redeemed humanity experiences eternal and indefectible fellowship with the Creator. Temple theology, attesting the sovereign presence of God with his people, takes its rise in Eden. The world totally endorsed as sacred space as the New Jerusalem is foreshadowed by the garden narrative.

If I have argued correctly that the Gen. 2 narrative is the substance of an implied creation covenant, the series of divinely imposed covenants in the canon finds its rationale in Eden. This being so, we would have to conclude that the undergirding factor in biblical theology is a creation theology. But how then is the material in between the beginning and the end integrated? The remainder of the Bible is pre-eminently taken up with material relating to salvation history, the history of divine redemptive activity. The difference between the two is that creation itself, both beginning and end, is unmotivated while redemption is 'redemption from' to 'redemption for'. The key to the understanding of the nexus between the two theologies of creation and redemption appears to be that when an understanding of redemption is conveyed in both Testaments, it is in terms of presupposed creation theology.

I have drawn attention to the man-

ner of the first reflection on the significance of redemption in Exodus 15: it is presented in standard Near Eastern creation mythological terms. We may also add the redemptive theology of Is. 40-55 and the theology of Is. 56-66, which designedly focuses redemptive activity upon the goal of the appearance of the new Jerusalem, the new creation. This is also clear in the New Testament presentation of redemption. The explicit Christological connection between creation and redemption is found in such passages as John 1:1-18 and Col 1:15-20.

A biblical theology based on Gen. 2 primarily concurs with the big picture of the Bible. Of course, the further task is to ensure that the details which support the superstructure suggested are all congruent. Biblical theology in itself is a descriptive endeavour. When we have evaluated whether the total picture and the supporting details present a coherent and a consistent world view (for in the final analysis the Bible is that), then we have to make the personal evaluation whether the picture so drawn and supported is consistent with the reality we encounter in our world and in the psychology of the self of which we are all too brutally aware. But such a movement beyond description is a final and subjective judgment as to which of the two possible world views, beginning with or without the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ we are led to accept. For ultimately the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is about a new way of looking at ourselves and our world. St. Paul knew that very well and put it succinctly – that if anyone was in Christ Jesus, there is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

Broken

Help us Lord to understand the nature of your brokenness,
And to perceive that beyond the breaking of tendon and tissue, was severance from your Father.
May we applaud that break which shook Heaven's structure;
As love and justice stood in unflinching confrontation.

May we applaud your brokenness, endured to rescue us to wholeness;
And from a broken-world of separation.

From *Becoming . . . (poetry reflecting theology)* by Garry Harris, Adelaide, South Australia. (used with permission)