

THE GREEN BIBLE

The Biblical Witness on Creation
(Prepared by the Rev. Stuart Taylor)

Hebrew Scriptures:

- Genesis 1-2 “And God said...”Creation is the first word of God, spoken into being.
- Genesis 1:26 And God said let us make man in our image.... And give him dominion. Is our misinterpretation of dominion the reason for our fall from paradise?
- Genesis 1:31 “And God saw all that had been made and it was very good”
The Creation was a deliberate act and fulfilled the Divine purpose.
- Genesis 2:15 “So the Lord God took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and care for it”. Our original vocation: Human beings are meant to be gardeners, using and caring for the earth.
- Genesis 9:8-17 The Rainbow Covenant.
Noah’s ark is the first endangered species project but really is a metaphor for the planet itself.
- Exodus chapters 7-9 The plagues against Egypt. (blood, gnats, flies, boils, hail etc.)
These environmental events could have actually happened in Egypt and in this precise succession, creating a social crisis of profound proportions that could have been seen as the hand of Yahweh. The ecological disasters of Exodus are the consequences of the imperial way of life. God’s judgment is in giving over the Empire to the consequences of its own behavior.
- Exodus 20:8-11 The 10 commandments, the commandment to keep the Sabbath includes the animals modeled on the creation spirituality of Genesis and the creation story.
- Leviticus 25 Jubilee tradition, an understanding of God’s time which allows for the release of captives, the forgiveness of debt and even allowing the land to be restored in fallow years.
- Psalms 8 What is man that Thou art mindful of him?
Essential paradox of the place of humankind in the cosmos: We are a little less than God and nothing but dust.
- Psalms 19: Day to day pours forth speech and night to night declares knowledge.

The psalmist and creation spirituality, 1st half of psalm is creation, 2nd half is inward journey- the Torah.

- Psalm 24, "The earth is the lord's and the fullness thereof". We are to be the stewards of the earth's resources, not their owners.
- Psalm 65, 96, 148 Do all creatures praise God in some mysterious way?
- Job 12:7 Ask the animals and they will teach you.
- Job: 38 God speaks out of the whirlwind- where you there when I created...?
- Isaiah 24:4-8 Again, God's judgment. The earth mourns withers. God in judgment lays waste to the earth.
- Isaiah 35 Ecological salvation: water flows and the desert blooms.
- Isaiah 40 To whom will you compare me? Very reminiscent of Job. Who has measured the water in the hollow of his hand?
- Isaiah 55:10-13 Word of God is like rain and snow.
- Isaiah 65:17-25 "For behold I create new heavens and a new earth...rejoice and be filled with delight, you boundless realms which I create". A vision of salvation includes dwelling on a prosperous land, enjoying the fruits of one's labor. (Life expectancy, living without fear. Heaven is Earth.
- Jeremiah 12:4 11 How long will the land mourn?
- Ezekiel 36 Enmity between land and people. Land is despoiled.

Christian Scriptures:

- Matthew 6: 10-13 The Lord's Prayer:
Our Father who is in the heavens, let your name be hallowed throughout the earth, let your reign come, let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.
- Matthew 6:26-30 "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow and reap and store in barns...Consider how the lilies grow in the fields, they do not spin" Nature, unlike humankind, is never guilty of "over-production".
- Luke 2: 1-20 "And on Earth peace".

It is only when the heavenly realm that comes to earth through the birth of God's child is the land soaked in peace. The earth awaits this birth so that the primordial vision of Genesis can be realized. Jesus birth makes the earth potentially a place of peace.

- Luke 4 In his first sermon, Jesus reclaims the Jubilee tradition (see Lev. 25)
- John 1:1-4 “So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth”. The spiritual and the natural are not at odds; they are symbiotic. God has re-entered creation. Incarnation, word made flesh is an affirmation of the world. That not only is the physical world not evil. But God intends to be re-united with all of creation by taking on flesh.
- Romans 8: 19 “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ...” Jesus is the prototype of an entirely new level of evolving humanity. As much as Jesus might have looked like any other homo sapiens, he was not. He was the first born hetero pacificus (peaceable humanity), who will bring a new species of creature into being.
- Romans 8:18-39 “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now, and not only the creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we await our adoption as sons and daughters and the redemption of our bodies”. The groaning of creation. The Geek verb here is that of a mother's “travail” in giving birth.
- I Timothy 4:1-5 For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it's received with thanksgiving. For then it is consecrated by the Word of God and by prayer.
- Revelation. 8:2-11:9 “We give thanks to thee Lord God Almighty who hast taken thy great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but thy wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear thy name, both great and small, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”
- Revelation 21:1-4 “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth ...I saw the holy City, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God”. God continues to promise a fresh start, redeeming even cities.
- Revelation 22:1-2 The River of Life that flows from the City of God for the healing of the nations. An apocalyptic vision of a transformed creation.