



BACKYARD PILGRIM

Preparing a Home

Genesis 1:1-2:3
May 14, 2023 | Tyler Williams

Backyard Pilgrim



“It is a pilgrimage not only to recover where you live and discover what God is already doing in your neighbourhood, but also to learn to live there as God’s child” (Canlis, BP5).

Backyard Pilgrim



Bible Path



“Where are you?”

Look into Scripture to see Who God is & Where God is, Who you are & Where you are.

Backyard Pilgrim



Parish Path



“Here I am!”

Realize that God is working in your own neighbourhood.

Preparing a Home



- When starting a pilgrimage, one starts from home...
- From looking at Genesis 1, we realize God is there at the very beginning... preparing a home.

Preparing a Home



- Creation as God's Temple.
- The sevenfold structure parallels accounts of temple building in the ANE.
- Culminates in the Sabbath when God's presence fills creation as he takes up his rest and rule in his temple.

Preparing a Home



“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1, NRSV).

- Summarizes all events in 1:2 -2:3 with seven words in Hebrew.
- The verb “create” (*bara* בָּרָא) only has God as its subject.

Preparing a Home



“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (1:2).

- “Formless and empty” (*tohu-vabohu*), “welter and waste” (*Alter*), or “formless void” (NRSV).
- Fourteen words in Hebrew (7x2).
- God is there at the beginning hovering over the waters, and proceeds to bring order out of chaos.

Preparing a Home



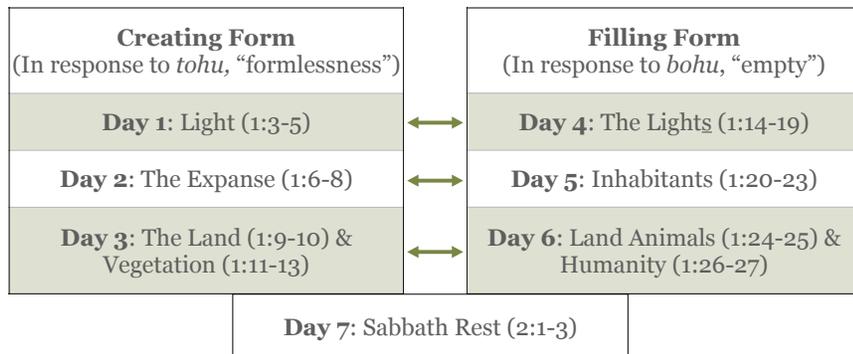
- Overall seven-day framework of creation.
- Formulae grouped in sevens: fulfillment (1:3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30); execution (1:4, 7, 12, 16, 21, 16, 21, 16, 21, 25, 27); approval (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31); and at the chronological framework (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31, 2:2).

Preparing a Home



- Panel Structure with eight works of creation spread over six days.
- Movement from *formlessness* to *form* and *emptiness* to *fullness*.

Preparing a Home



Preparing a Home



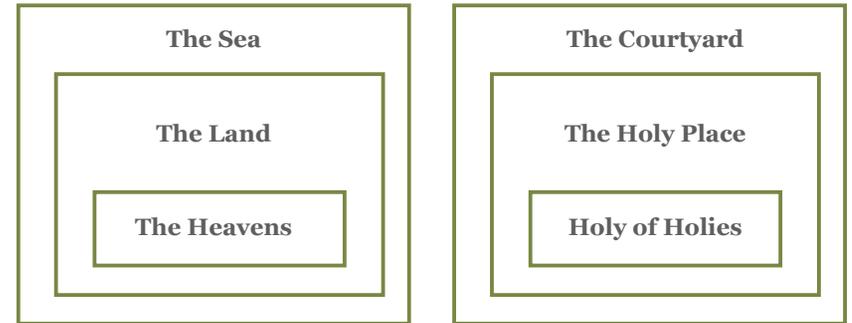
- All of these characteristics emphasize the idea of design, completion, and perfection and link it to ANE temple building.
“He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever” (Ps 78:69).

Preparing a Home



“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being? – declares Yahweh” (Isaiah 66:1-2).

Preparing a Home



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- In the Ancient Near East, temples were built in seven days.
- In the Bible, parallels between Genesis 1 and the seven-day consecration of the Tabernacle in Exodus 39-40 and the seven-year construction of the Jerusalem Temple (see 1 Kings 6:38).

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- In contrast with ANE, such accounts never claimed the entire cosmos for their god(s), while the God of the Bible is sovereign over all creation and the entire cosmos is his home.

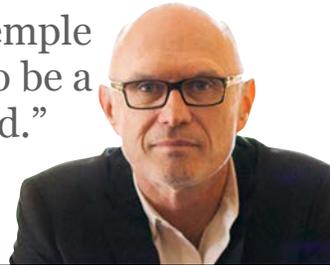
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- Highlights that the world is a place for God's presence — a home for God.

“To envision the world as a temple is to say that God intends it to be a dwelling place or home of God.”

— Miroslav Volf, *The Home of God*, 6.



Preparing a Home



- But in a sense God never moves in because of a series of ruptures — or falls — occur that forestall the fulfilment of that intention.
- God coming to dwell with Israel in the tabernacle and later the temple, looks forward to the day when God will dwell in fullness with his people.

Preparing a Home



- In Christ, God has come to live among humans...
“The Word became flesh and *made his dwelling* [lit. “tabernacled”] among us” (John 1:14).
- The book of Revelation looks forward to the day when God will make his home among his people:
“Behold *the home of God is among humans*, he will dwell with them they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them” (Rev 21:1-3).

Preparing a Home



“The cosmos... was conceived as a macro-temple..., the palace of God in which all are obedient to his commands.”

— Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 86.



Creating Children



- The creation of humanity is the pinnacle of the creation account.
- Last and longest account (1:26-30).
- Divine deliberation (“Let us,” 1:26).
- Described as “very good” (1:31).

Creating Children



- Only humankind is made in God’s Image.
- Marked contrast to other ANE accounts.
- “A freeperson is as the shadow of a god, the slave is as the shadow of a freeperson; but the king, he is like the very image of god” (*Letter to Esarhaddon*).

Creating Children



- Significance of the Image.
- Dominion over creation?
- A quality within humanity?
- Relational capacity?

Creating Children



ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו God created *ha'adam* in his image

בצלם אלהים ברא אתו in **the image of God** he created him

זכר ונקבה ברא אתם **male and female** he created them

Creating Children



- Vertical Dimension: We are like God.
- Horizontal Dimension: Created for Community.

Creating Children



- Our sense of identity – who we are – should be based on how God created us in his image and how that image is being redeemed and renewed in Christ (Col 1:15, 3:10; Rom 8:29; 2Cor 3:18).

Conclusions



- Who is God?
 - God is the Creator, sustainer, and redeemer of his World.
- Where is God?
 - God is at home in the world, the cosmos is his good — albeit fallen — creation.

Conclusions



- Where are you?
 - Humans are at home in the world, the world was created to house all of God's creation and to bring him glory.

Conclusions



- Who are you?
- You are created, not as slaves, but as beloved creatures in God's image to be his representatives in this world.