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FORMED FROM THE DUST OF THE GROUND:  
A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND  
THE GROUND IN GENESIS 1-12

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the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
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Doctor of Ministry

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by  
David Joseph Nickerson  
December 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

FORMED FROM THE DUST OF THE GROUND:  
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David Joseph Nickerson

Read and Approved by:

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Robert L. Plummer (Faculty Supervisor)

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James M. Hamilton, Jr.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

For the glory of God and the good of his people.

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## PREFACE

This project is dedicated to my lovely wife, Rebekah. You are my best friend and greatest ally.

Joey

Annapolis, Maryland

December 2021



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

There is a pain which exists in the fabric of human life. It is timeless and inescapable. Blaise Pascal noted how it left men unhappy and unable to “stay quietly in their own chamber,” alone with their thoughts.<sup>1</sup> It is what Soren Kierkegaard calls “the sickness unto death.”<sup>2</sup> The pain which exists in the fabric of human life is despair. Kierkegaard tells us precisely what creates this despair; it is being “conscious of having a Self and an eternal Self,” meaning, every person is aware of who they ought to be, but who they presently are.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible explains the reason for this despair, and how to find relief from it.<sup>4</sup> The explanation emerges in the story of humanity’s origin, the narrative of Genesis. Crucial to discerning this explanation is observing the inextricable relationship between man and the ground. If the reader pays careful attention to this inextricable relationship, they will discover why they despair and how to overcome it. But this endeavor requires reading Genesis 1-12 with a biblical theological lens. Therefore, we must establish what

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<sup>1</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts, Letters and Minor Works*, ed. Charles W. Eliot, trans. W. F. Trotter, M. L. Booth and O. W. Wight (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1910), 52-53.

<sup>2</sup> Soren Kierkegaard, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 341.

<sup>3</sup> Kierkegaard, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 341.

<sup>4</sup> In this project, my emphasis is the existential self. This is not the only modern crisis of self which the Bible can speak to. Carl Trueman helpfully demonstrates how the existential crisis of the self was provoked by Rousseau, whereby Rousseau advocates for allegiance to one’s desires. But the existential crisis becomes the gateway for later thinkers who are concerned with self-expression. Freud follows Rousseau and posits that sexual expression ought not be suppressed for the self to be realized. Marx follows and locates any authority structure as a suppressive entity when it opposes self-realization. Although the aim of the project has implications for sexual expression (Freud) and self-expression as it relates to authority (Marx), the emphasis of this project resides in the sphere of Rousseau’s existential self. Carl L. Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 320.

biblical theology is.

### **Definition of Biblical Theology**

In this project I will define biblical theology as the Bible's presentation of its own themes and categories, utilized and expounded by later biblical authors, thus rendering a unified presentation of reality.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the discipline of biblical theology has three movements. The interpreter moves from exegesis in the immediate context to locations in the canon which, in some way, interact with the foundational text, which infers a perspective concerning life, built to handle the questions and complexities of any age.

The first movement in interpretation is exegesis in the immediate context. This requires the reader to come to the authors words with a commitment to original intent.<sup>6</sup> One breaks this commitment when they insert their own ideas and definitions into the text.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the interpreter must abide by the rules of language and work with the

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<sup>5</sup> Geerhardus Vos agrees with this definition. He defines biblical theology as a discipline that “reads the Bible on its own terms, following the Bible’s own internal contours and shape, in order to discover God’s unified plan as it is disclosed to us over time,” and adds that it is the “exhibition of the organic process of supernatural revelation.” Geerhardus Vos, “The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline,” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980), 15. Additionally, Vos espouses a method where both the historical situation and its documentation are both the process of God’s self-revelation; meaning, God reveals himself in time and space, as well as the recording of God’s activity in time and space. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 4-5. For alternative approaches, see Francis Watson, *The Open Text: New Directions for Biblical Studies?* (London: SCM Press, 1993), 2-4. Francis Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997). Francis Watson espouses a method of biblical theology which is primarily concerned with the history of interpretation in order to discover the meaning of the text. In other words, Watson seeks to go behind the text to discern God’s revelation. Brevard Childs espouses a method of biblical theology which is primarily concerned with the final form of the text, de-emphasizing the divine-revelatory nature of historical events and emphasizing the divine revelation of the final form of the canon. Childs’ view sees authorial intent as impossible to access. Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2011), 74-76.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin J. Vanhoozer states, “the meaning of a text is what the author attended to in tending to his words.” Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 262. This is not to neglect the role of the divine author, as Robert L. Plummer states, “When dealing with the Scriptures, to properly interpret a text is to faithfully convey the inspired human author’s meaning of the text, while not neglecting divine intent.” Robert L. Plummer, *Understanding the Bible: A Guide to Reading and Enjoying Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2013), 9. I will discuss the role of the divine author below.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*

constraints of the original language, grammar, and syntax. But then, in order to discern the most accurate understanding of a given sentence, with its chosen words and grammatical characteristics, two features need consulting. Firstly, the surrounding context must determine further the meaning of a word or sentence.<sup>8</sup> Second, the interpreter must consult resources which reconstruct the social and historical setting of the world in which the author is living.<sup>9</sup> Both the surrounding context and the socio-historical background will offer helpful clarification for the interpretive task. Therefore, in this project, one must remember that Moses is writing about events that take place well before his own time. The meaning of Moses' writing becomes clearer when reconstructing Moses' own historical setting, with its concurrent traditions and ideas, since it would invariably influence the content of Genesis 1-12.<sup>10</sup>

Then, the meaning of a textual sub-unit is further illuminated by analyzing the significance of its placement within the broader literary unit, while also accounting for the broader unit's variety of literary features.<sup>11</sup> To account for the variety of literary features, one must have a sensitive eye for diversity of genre, complexity of language, figures of speech, and literary contours, as well as an eye for detecting the organic

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(Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 40, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence explains, "So the basic unit of meaning is not the word but the sentence. And the unit that determines what sentences mean and therefore the words in them, is the paragraph." Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 42.

<sup>9</sup> Edward W. Klink III, and Darian R. Locket, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), chap. 1, "Scope and Sources of Biblical Theology," para. 2, Kindle.

<sup>10</sup> Before Moses wrote the Pentateuch, there were likely preceding oral and written accounts of God's words and deeds which he had access to and utilized. James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), chap. 1, sec. 2.1, para. 1, Kindle. This is a reasonable assumption given that the Bible indicates that records were maintained even from early stages in Israel's history (Exod 17:14; Num 21:14; Josh 10:14). It is plausible that similarly, in the early stages of Israel's history, these sources would be kept by the patriarchs and their tribal ancestors. John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 24.

<sup>11</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *What is Biblical Theology: A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), chap. 2, para. 6, Kindle.

sequence of the literary work. All of these will share a dynamically enriching relationship.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, interpreting a text in reference to the broader literary unit will expose any repetition of words, images, concepts and associations. This causes prominent characteristics to surface from the text, thus forming a pattern. When a visible pattern presents itself, it conveys an authorially purposed, textually innate, theme. Recall that my definition of biblical theology begins as, “the Bible’s presentation of its own themes and categories.” Practicing exegesis with reference to the immediate context, informed by familiarity with the socio-historical setting, maintaining awareness of placement within the literary unit and awareness of its surrounding literary features will naturally lead to noticing patterns, which buttress theme.

Subsequently, the interpreter must consult the canon of scripture to see if later authors verify or expand the meaning of the earlier text.<sup>13</sup> This is what I mean when I write in my definition that the Bible’s own presented themes are “utilized and expounded by later biblical authors.” Therefore, there is an intertextuality across the canon of the Bible that confirms and even elaborates on the themes from earlier scripture.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgment*, chap.1, sec. 2.1, para. 5, Kindle.

<sup>13</sup> Aubrey Siqueira and Samuel C. Emadi give a more detailed explanation, saying, “Biblical-theological exegesis is not limited to the grammatical-historical investigations of ‘meaning’ in the original context but also include the redemptive-historical and literary-canonical contexts which both *develop* and *constrain* the original meaning of a text” (my emphasis). Aubrey Siqueira and Samuel C. Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis and the Nature of Typology,” *SBJT* 21, no. 1 (2017): 14.

Without the verification of a canonical approach, an interpretation can mistakenly revert to spiritualizing a text. Charles Spurgeon makes this mistake in advocating for spiritualizing a text: “A great deal of good may be done by occasionally taking forgotten, quaint, unremarkable, out-of-the-way texts,” and allegorizing them, so that these texts are kept “out of the rut of dull formality, and it yields us a sort of salt with which to give flavor to unpalatable truth... be not afraid to spiritualize... [and] draw from them meanings which may not lie upon the surface.” Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 100-01. An example from Spurgeon’s preaching ministry is when he interprets Moses’ invitation to his father-in-law (Num 10:29) as precedent for inviting others to heaven. Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 100n16.

<sup>14</sup> That is to say, an assertion made by the interpreter concerning a biblical author’s intended message should be substantiated by later biblical authors. If later biblical authors forge intertextual relationship with previous scripture, then they deem the themes, ideas, propositions, and insights in the original passage as crucial for understanding the progressing revelation of God and his redemptive plan. Siqueira and Emadi comment: “Biblical theology is more than simply tracing themes through Scripture.

Consequently, the interpreter must identify the intertextual touching points between earlier and later passages. These intertextual relationships are either overt or subtle. Overt intertextual relationships will be obvious in exegetical features of the text, such as lexical forging between passages. The subtle intertextual relationships are forged in shared images, concepts and associations.<sup>15</sup> G. K. Beale models this method of biblical-theological interpretation, scoping the canon for subtle intertextual relationships, describing the earlier scripture as having a “thick description,” which the later author presupposes and carries into his writing. Thus, the later text’s interpretation must account for the foundational text’s secondary ideas, even if they are not explicitly referenced.<sup>16</sup> Altogether, an overt textual link or a subtle conceptual link has the potential to conceal within it reference to the foundational text’s larger literary range, which the later text transfers into itself. This gives both the foundational text and the later text a richer, more complex meaning. So then, mastering this method of intertextual interpretation qualifies the reader to share in the assumptions operating below the text that the biblical author and his audience would take for granted.<sup>17</sup> This is to say that the interpreter has learned what James Hamilton defines as biblical-theology: “the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors.”<sup>18</sup> When the biblical authors’ exegetical logic is adopted by the reader, they possess the framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identifications, truths and symbols that are shared between the author and the original

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Doing biblical theology means attempting to understand the logic of Scripture’s unfolding drama and make sense of how each part fits into the whole.” Siqueira and Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis and the Nature of Typology,” 13.

<sup>15</sup> Canonical interpretation repeats some of the same disciplines of interpreting a text within its own textual unit.

<sup>16</sup> G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 25, Kindle.

<sup>17</sup> James M. Hamilton, Jr., *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 32 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 23, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>18</sup> Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology*, chap. 2, para. 1, Kindle.

audience.<sup>19</sup>

Yet, the Bible's intertextuality is at its optimum when one adopts the interpretive method of Jesus. In Luke 24:27, Christ "interprets in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."<sup>20</sup> The person and work of Jesus is the culminative climax of the trajectory of the progressive revelation of scripture. It is this method which Jesus taught his apostles, who exhibited it in their writings. So then, the NT authors take OT themes and utilize and expound on them in light of Christ. This practice demonstrates the "coherent, interdependent and mutually illuminating" nature of the entire Bible.<sup>21</sup> This also means an OT author may have written better than they knew, since operating behind the human author is the divine author who is bringing progressive revelation to its finish in Christ, and who has invested scripture with meaning that "emerges only at the level of the whole canon."<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, a feature the biblical authors use to track the re-emergence of key themes throughout the canon to its culmination in Christ is typology.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology*, chap. 2, para. 1, Kindle.

Included with sensitivity to exegetical features is an understanding of figurative versus literal language. Scott R. Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark), 127, Kindle. This project operates under the assumption that the language employed by Moses to describe the events in Genesis one through twelve are literal, and that later authors treat it as such. Yet, it will be argued that some aspects of the historical garden of Eden becomes symbols for new eschatological realities.

<sup>20</sup> John Webster, *Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), chap. 2, sec. 3, para. 9, Kindle.

<sup>21</sup> Webster, *Domain of the Word*, chap. 2, sec. 3, para. 9, Kindle.

<sup>22</sup> Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text*, 264. G. K. Beale adds, "The way to "to interpret texts in light of their broader literary context, their broader redemptive-historical epoch of which they are a part, and to interpret earlier texts from earlier epochs, attempting to explain them in light of the progressive revelation to which earlier scriptural authors would not have had access." G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 104n41).

Biblical theology, then, prevents proof texting because an interpretation must be consistent with the authors intended meaning and how later authors verify that meaning and expound on it. A grammatical-historical, Christological-canonical influenced interpretation of a specific text means the reader will inevitably develop a proper systematic theology, rather than one that lacks integrity to the exegetical meaning. D. A. Carson, "Systematic and Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 94.

<sup>23</sup> James Hamilton articulates the difference between reading the text figurally and typologically. He writes, "while typological connections are usually established by direct appeals to textual evidence – exegetical features of the texts that forge the connections being interpreted – the word figurally

Earle Ellis' definition of typology is "not as a 'one-to-one' equation or correspondence, in which the old is repeated or continued, but rather in terms of two principles, historical correspondence and escalation."<sup>24</sup> It is real, historical things, events or figures that are recorded in scripture, which compound and culminate into the height of their escalation, or archetype. The height of escalation and the culminative climax of the story of the Bible is "the self-revelatory work of the risen Christ."<sup>25</sup> Without this typology-sustained, Christological-canonical grid, the canon loses a completed unity.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the theme of the man and the ground in Genesis 1-12 is verified in its latter usage, as later authors use it to capture the human experience, and its significance is expressed in the dynamic of its interaction with the work Christ.

This leads to the final phrase of my definition of biblical theology, which is after the later authors utilize the Bible's own themes in their own writings, they "render a unified presentation of reality." This is to say that the various assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identifications, truths and symbols, all fulfilled in Christ, are used to interpret the human experiences witnessed by the biblical authors, thus deeming these items as accurate and beneficial ways for the reader to interpret their own experiences.<sup>27</sup> Said another way, later biblical authors see their human experience, or the typical human experience, as an installment in a recurring pattern that is apparent throughout progressive revelation, and project this pattern as an ongoing reality which

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now seems to be used to refer to connections forged by the interpreter apart from exegetical details in the text." Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology*, chap. 2, para. 4, Kindle.

<sup>24</sup> E. Earle Ellis, foreword to *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, by Leonhard Goppelt, trans. Donald H. Madvig. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1982), x.

<sup>25</sup> Webster, *Domain of the Word*, chap. 2, sec. 3, para. 9, Kindle.

<sup>26</sup> Webster, *Domain of the Word*, chap. 2, sec. 3, para. 9, Kindle.

<sup>27</sup> "As we seek to understand and embrace the worldview reflected in the writings of the biblical authors, we are seeking to understand and embrace their symbolic universe." Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology*, chap. 6, para. 14. The biblical authors use phraseology, ideas, themes – their symbolic universe – to depict their experiences as well as to understand their experiences. The reader is invited to adopt this symbolic universe as their own framework for life.

shares a dynamic relationship with progressive revelation's telos; Christ. So then, biblical theology is capable of answering the existential questions that modern readers impose upon it, since biblical theology ultimately culminates in articulating a perspective of the world, and the human experience within it. What we think and how we live is determined by a framework of explanations – a larger story.<sup>28</sup> So then, a biblical theological reading of Genesis 1-12 and its re-appearance in later scripture, and its confrontation with the revelatory work of Christ, is essential for successfully navigating the human experience.

### **Purpose of Biblical Theology**

We need a framework to make sense of our lives; we need to understand ourselves through story.<sup>29</sup> The purpose of biblical theology is to invite the reader to understand their personal experience in its most accurate depiction, which is sustained throughout the scriptures by the biblical authors. Just as they caption their own experiences in language and concepts that originate in previous scripture, thereby seeing a continuum in their life to previous events, and thus become participants in an ongoing metanarrative, so the reader must adopt the same language, concepts and associations to understand the events of their own life and become participants in the same metanarrative.<sup>30</sup> Upon consciously entering the same stream of existence as the biblical authors, the reader in turn begins to understand their own human experience as patterned after the typical human experience of the Bible. Thus, the world of the Bible and the reader's personal world merge into one reality. This is necessary if the purpose of this project is to be successful; readers of Genesis 1-12 must see the difficulty of their life

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<sup>28</sup> Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology*, chap. 1, para. 4, Kindle.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (N.p: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1999), 1.

<sup>30</sup> A metanarrative is “a totalizing theory that aims to subsume all events, all perspectives, and all forms of knowledge in a comprehensive explanation.” Richard Bauckham, “Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story,” in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Richard B. Hays and Ellen F. Davis (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 45.



explained in its story – as well as its hope for relief.

### **Biblical Theology and Preaching**

Why is entertainment omnipresent? Meaning, whether we are in our homes, or in our cars, or with our friends, we are constantly consuming our favorite film franchises and television shows which are ever-accessible by the plethora of streaming services. The reason is because we are drawn to stories. J. R. R. Tolkien explains that the reason why story is so intriguing is because “the peculiar quality of the ‘joy’ in successful fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth.”<sup>31</sup> Within a story, especially fiction, are items that fulfill a longing for idealism and satisfying conclusion. These stories give us a world to escape to, and allow us to forget for a time the dysfunctional world we truly live in. Timothy Keller puts it like this: “tales bring us joy, because deep down we sense that they describe the world as it ought to be and what we were made for.”<sup>32</sup> It is the task of the preacher to herald the story that describes the human experience as it is, and as it ought to be – and could be. He is to do this through faithful exposition of the Bible.

Faithful exposition of the Bible will include exposing the themes that are constructed by the biblical authors. If successful, the preacher presents a story that will grip listeners more deeply than the conveyor belt of stories we sooth ourselves with. The reason is because any other story is only fiction or cannot offer a permanent solution to our deeply felt human despair. The preacher has the true story that explains what our humanity should be, what is missing, and how to recover it. That story is Genesis 1-12.

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<sup>31</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories,” accessed December 1, 2019, [https://uh.edu/fdis/\\_taylor-dev/readings/tolkien.html](https://uh.edu/fdis/_taylor-dev/readings/tolkien.html)

<sup>32</sup> Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: Finding God in the Modern World* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 173, Kindle.

## Literature on Genesis 1-12

Genesis is a fascinating literary work. Thus, there is no shortage of relevant literature on Genesis. This project will mainly consult resources geared towards exegesis and theology.

### Exegetical Commentaries

The first commentary of on Genesis I poured over was by Gordon J. Wenham.<sup>33</sup> Consulting Wenham's commentary on Genesis gave me the confidence to pursue key suspicions I had concerning the message of Genesis. Besides his thorough explanation of the text, helpful too was Wenham's attention to the original language, providing extensive commentary on translation difficulties as well as shedding light on the role the original language plays in developing and carrying the story of Genesis forward. Additionally, although Derek Kidner's commentary on Genesis is concise, it is not basic.<sup>34</sup> His straightforward analysis proved to be of great guidance. Also, Matthew Henry's commentary gives detailed attention to translation. My chapter dealing with Cain is specifically indebted to his insight.<sup>35</sup> *The New American Commentary Series* proved to be incredibly helpful. Specifically, K. A. Matthews's exhaustive commentary on Genesis in this series provided a gambit of interpretations and did not shy away from interacting with divergent interpretations.<sup>36</sup> John Walton's commentary on Genesis in the *NIV Application Commentary* was informative,<sup>37</sup> and equally illuminating was Victor

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<sup>33</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1987).

<sup>34</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973).

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), Logos Bible Software.

<sup>36</sup> K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), Logos Bible Software.

<sup>37</sup> John H. Walton, *Genesis: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

Hamilton's work in Genesis.<sup>38</sup> Lastly, John Calvin's commentary on Genesis is commendable.<sup>39</sup>

There are several smaller works which proved to be invaluable in my research. I benefited from Patrick Miller's exploration of Genesis one through eleven,<sup>40</sup> and W. Malcom Clark's exegetical treatment on "good" and "evil" became foundational for the direction of my project.<sup>41</sup> Also foundational for the direction of this project was Peter Gentry's short study on the meaning of the divine image and likeness in Genesis 1:26.<sup>42</sup> Another formative article was Karen Swenson's work on the connections between Genesis 3-4.<sup>43</sup> Outside of these works on Genesis, I am indebted to several exegetical works which became relevant to my treatment of Genesis. David G. Peterson's new commentary on Romans in the *Evangelical Biblical Commentary* series,<sup>44</sup> along with Douglas Moo's robust article on Romans chapter eight.<sup>45</sup>

## Theological Works

I am most indebted to Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum's *Kingdom Through Covenant*.<sup>46</sup> The sixth chapter on God's covenant with creation gave me eyes to vividly

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<sup>38</sup> Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> John Calvin and John King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2010), Logos Bible Software.

<sup>40</sup> Patrick D. Miller, Jr, *Genesis 1-11: Studies in Structure and Theme*, Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 8 (Sheffield, England: The University of Sheffield, 1978).

<sup>41</sup> W. Malcom Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 3 (1969): 266-278.

<sup>42</sup> Peter J. Gentry, *Biblical Studies*, (Peterborough: H&E Academic, 2020).

<sup>43</sup> Kristin M. Swenson, "Care and Keeping East of Eden: Genesis 4:1-16 in Light of Genesis 2-3," in *Interpretation* October 60, no. 4 (2006): 378-84.

<sup>44</sup> David G. Peterson, *Romans*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), Logos Bible Software.

<sup>45</sup> Douglas J. Moo, "Nature in the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment," in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 3 (September 2006): 449-88.

<sup>46</sup> Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological*

see the human experience in the garden of Eden. Also influential was John Sailhamer's *Genesis Unbound*.<sup>47</sup> Although I do not cite it frequently, his defense of the continuity between Genesis chapters one and two broadened my framework and allowed me to make key connections. Other works which were key in my understanding of Genesis were *The Flame of Yahweh* by Richard Davidson,<sup>48</sup> and *Dignity and Destiny* by John Kilner.<sup>49</sup> In the portions of this project where I dealt with later allusions to the themes of Genesis, *A New Testament Biblical Theology* by G. K. Beale,<sup>50</sup> and both *The Resurrection of the Son of God* and *The Climax of the Covenant* by N. T. Wright served as instrumental.<sup>51</sup>

Beyond these works, the *New Studies in Biblical Theology Series* provides several noteworthy resources. In *Who Shall Ascend*, L. Michael Morales offered advantageous interpretive insights in the book of Genesis.<sup>52</sup> He also shows how key themes in Genesis re-appear in later scripture. G. K. Beale, similarly, in *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, expounds on the meaning of Genesis and its influence upon the

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*Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* (Sisters, NY: Multnomah Books, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2015), Kindle.

<sup>50</sup> G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 3 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2003), Kindle. Also, N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), Kindle.

<sup>52</sup> L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, vol. 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), Logos Bible Software.

Also, L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, *Essential Studies in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), Kindle.

rest of the canon.<sup>53</sup> Lastly, in *Dominion and Dynasty*,<sup>54</sup> Stephen Dempster demonstrates Genesis one through twelve to contain unified message by showing how its various features and literary devices purposefully complement one another to present a unified message.

### **Rationale**

Andrew Delbanco in his book *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope*, proves that humans must understand their lives to be contributing to something that transcends their own minimal number of days.<sup>55</sup> Americans have understood themselves within the story of God, nation and currently through the self. In the secular pursuit of personal realization, a despondency becomes detectable as individuals bow underneath the weight of self-demand, with no end in sight.<sup>56</sup> This melancholy is self-evident. The absence of meaning in human existence is aggravated by the excessive amount of new information at our fingertips and the gambit of identity choices pressed upon us; the modern self is flooded with what they could do and who they could be. Accordingly, we present ever-changing versions of ourselves.<sup>57</sup> Ironically, this despair is worsened by societal progress – not lessened. Yuval Noah Harari writes, “we become satisfied when reality meets our expectations. The bad news is that when conditions improve, expectations balloon.”<sup>58</sup> It seems that the more information we accumulate and

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<sup>53</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), Logos Bible Software.

<sup>54</sup> Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), Logos Bible Software.

<sup>55</sup> Delbanco, *The Real American Dream*, 1.

<sup>56</sup> Delbanco, *The Real American Dream*, 98.

<sup>57</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 164, Kindle.

<sup>58</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017), 34, Kindle. Harari’s aim in this book is to predict that humans will undergo an evolutionary

society advances, the more miserable we are.<sup>59</sup>

Further, the pressure felt in creating a substantial identity yet feeling personally fragile is counteracted by attaching to group identities through politics. The intensity and loyalty of group-attachment increases at a corresponding rate to the deepening inescapability of the fragile self. Consequently, a tribal mindset is bred, and morally sanctioned, for whereas “once upon a time we looked to politics primarily for governance, we now look to it for belonging, righteousness, meaning, and deliverance – in other words, all the things for which we used to rely on Religion.”<sup>60</sup> Not only is the self fractured, but society is too. Never has a culture been more aware of fellow human beings yet disconnected from fellow human beings.<sup>61</sup>

Citizens Church planted in Annapolis, Maryland in August 2017, to present individuals with an answer for the missing substance in their human experience. The presentation is preaching, and the answer takes shape in Genesis and finishes with Christ. So then, I believe what Citizens Church needs is a biblical theological exposition of Genesis 1-12, giving careful attention to the theme of the relationship between man and the ground. By studying this theme, Citizens Church will come to an accurate explanation for why the human experience is shackled with despair, and what will confer its release.

### **Summary of Biblical Passages**

Throughout the story arch of Genesis 1-12, there is a theme intertwined that must not be missed: the deep connection of mankind (*'ādām*) to the soil (*ādāmāh*). While the foundational textual unit is Genesis 1-12, later biblical authors interact with its

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advancement through technology in order to keep up with the ballooning expectations of a meaningful life.

<sup>59</sup> This is because the more one becomes aware of possible outcomes, both personal and societal, the more one realizes the optimum outcomes are likely unattainable and are not guaranteed.

<sup>60</sup> David Zahl, *Seculosity: How Career, Parenting, Technology, Food, Politics, and Romance Became our New Religion and What to Do about It* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019), 157.

<sup>61</sup> Fukuyama, *Identity*, 110.

themes in ways which verify and expand its significance. I will begin by exposing the interplay between the '*ādām*' and the '*adāmāh*', and how it reveals the full expression of the divine image and likeness, thus leading to bliss. This same interplay will also signal the loss of existential bliss as the curse of the ground render the divine image and likeness unrealized to its fullest degree. I then observe how the later biblical authors support my proposition by tracing how they use the curse of the ground theme as the hallmark expression for existential anguish. After this is turn back to Genesis and locate the divergent lines of humanity, Seth and Cain, and how each seeks to recover the existential bliss humanity was intended to experience – the former in relationship with God and the latter on its own terms. The '*ādām*' and the '*adāmāh*' again give expression to the existential state of humanity, as the '*adāmāh*' becomes the stage for humanity's abusive dominion, as well as the source which indicts the '*ādām*', thus ensuring the need for humanity's renewal through a new '*ādām*'. I move to the later biblical authors who confirm my findings as they anticipate a figure who will commence the reversal of the curse of the ground through resurrection, thereby ushering in a reality that permits the divine image and likeness to be realized fully, as if back in the garden of Eden. Finally, Jesus proves to be the awaited champion, since the NT authors hold to a resurrection hope patterned after his own resurrection. The curse of the ground will be removed, and existential bliss will be recovered as the divine image and likeness attains its fullest potential – and by spiritual resurrection through the indwelling Holy Spirit, this existential bliss can already, to some degree, be enjoyed. Below is a concise summary of the biblical passages that are central to my thesis.

### **Genesis 1:26-2:25**

God creates man in his own image and likeness (1:26). Immediately thereafter, the divine image and likeness is expressed in God's intimate relationship with and grand commissioning of man (1:28). The '*ādām*' - '*adāmāh*' motif then beings to carry onward

the story of the human experience in the sequence of man's creation and the garden's preparation (2:5-9). Then, man's activity in the garden highlights the expression of the divine image and likeness, as he exercises dominion over the '*adāmāh*' underneath God's guidance (2:15-17). The '*ādām*' - '*adāmāh*' motif emerges again to propel the reader to the climactic expression of the divine image and likeness, as '*ādām*' exercises dominion over the animals who come from the '*adāmāh*', and then joyously over his wife who comes from the '*ādām*' (2:18-25). Altogether, humanity experiences existential bliss as the divine image and likeness is realized.

### **Genesis 3:1-7; 17-19; 22-24**

Human existential bliss is threatened the moment '*ādām*' ceases to faithfully exercise dominion over that which came from the '*adāmāh*' and the '*ādām*'. Then, it is lost when '*ādām*' decisively breaks trust with God (3:6). The '*adāmāh*' forewarns the consequences of sin; existential frustration due to gardenless dominion activity and mortality (3:17-19), which is commenced by expulsion (3:22-24).

### **Job 3-5**

The author of Job uses the words "trouble" (*āmēl*) and "affliction" (*'a`wèn*) to depict the anguish of life. Job's "trouble" (*āmēl*) derives from the curse of the ground (3:25), and "trouble" (*āmēl*) and "affliction" (*'a`wèn*) come from the dust and sprout from the '*adāmāh*' (5:6-7).

### **Ecclesiastes 3**

The author of Ecclesiastes' language is shaped by his reading of the book of Job. Taking Job's phrase, "trouble" (*āmēl*) to summarize frustration in life due to the aftermath of the curse of the ground, the author of Job considers the struggle of human mortality (3:9-11). His conclusion affirms the tyranny of the curse of the ground: in the end, the '*ādām*' is no better off than the beasts (3:19-20).



## **Psalm 90**

Moses captures the realities of the curse of the ground with the pairing “toil” (*'a`wèn*) and “trouble” (*āmēl*, 90:10). In doing so, he shows himself to be the originator of the pairing of these terms, and also deems these two terms to be directly tied to the curse of the ground, since Moses wrote both Genesis 3:17-19 and Psalm 90.

## **Genesis 4-11**

The *'adāmāh`* alerts the reader of further existential frustration as it hints at Cain's forthcoming failure (4:2-3) and indicts him for it (4:10). Then, it becomes the vehicle that moves Cain deeper into existential despair (4:11, 12). Cain and his lineage respond to their exile by attempting to realize the divine image and likeness on their own terms (4:17-24; 11:1-9). Parallel to Cain's lineage is Seth's, who seek to recover God's intention for human existence (4:25-26; 5:1-3, 28-29). But the *'adāmāh`* signals a harrowing shift when *'ādām* multiplies on the face of the *'adāmāh`* and is overcome by the line of Cain (6:1-2), thus spreading its distorted dominion, polluting the *'adāmāh`* and warranting its purging (6:5, 7). Finally, even with a new humanity arisen from a cleansed *'adāmāh`*, *'ādām* still needs cleansing (8:21; 9:20-21).

## **Genesis 5:29**

Lamech names his son, “Noah,” which sounds like the word for “rest.” His inspiration is his longing for rest from the curse of the *'adāmāh`* (5:29). Thus, Lamech sets into motion an expectation for the curse to be lifted through a new *'ādām*.

## **Job 19:25-26**

Job confidently expects to meet God face to face and receive vindication. He states that God “lives” (*hāy*) and will “stand” (*qwm*) on the “dust” (*'āpār*, 19:25). Then his next statement suggests this vindication will occur in the flesh, but after death and decomposition (19:26). It appears Job anticipates meeting God upon the surface which he returned to, thus alluding to a triumph over the curse of the ground.

### **Psalm 104:29-30**

The Psalter affirms Job's resurrection suspicions by declaring that God causes living creatures to "return to their dust" ('*āpār*, 104:29) and subsequently, in borrowed language from Genesis, posits that God renews from "the face of the '*adāmāh*'" (104:30).

### **Daniel 12:2**

The angel in Daniel's vision projects a time when those who have returned to the "dust ('*āpār*) of the earth ('*adāmāh*')" will "awake" (*qys*) to either everlasting "life" (*hāy*) or shame (12:2). Not only does this reach back to the creation of man in Genesis but is also makes concrete the resurrection suspicions of Job and the re-creating power of God in Psalm 104. The following verse (12:3) confirms that this event will result in the fulfillment on the divine image.

### **Isaiah 26:19**

The vision in Daniel 12:2, and the triumph over the dust anticipated by Job and the Psalter are confirmed in Isaiah. Isaiah 26:19 anticipates the dead to "live" (*hyh*), "rise" (*qwm*) and "awake" (*qys*) from the "dust" ('*āpār*).

### **Ezekiel 37**

What appears to be a surge of hope for national revolution is, at its fullest meaning, the hope for human resurrection. Language from the creation account is employed to describe resurrection (37:5-6) and its final goal (37:14, 17, 24, 26, 28). In this event, the curse of the ground appears to be overturned whilst the human destiny is reinstated. Moreover, Ezekiel's vision includes features from Psalm 104, Isaiah 26:19, and Daniel twelve, confirming a shared consciousness of resurrection as the answer to Lamech's longing.

### **Daniel 7:13-14**

Lamech's longing for a new '*adām* who will initiate the resurrection is the

“Son of Man” in Daniel 7:13-14. This figure seems to be both son and king, thus realizing the human destiny.

### **Ezekiel 37:24-28**

The “Servant David” of Ezekiel’s resurrection prophecy inaugurates a new reality and a new humanity, both of which are framed in Edenic language, thus implying that the reality of the curse of the ground has been superseded.

### **Isaiah 52:13-53:13**

The means by which the new *'ādām* will answer the longings of Lamech is a vicarious death and a vicarious resurrection.

### **Genesis 12:1-3**

Although the fulfillment of Lamech’s longing for a new *'ādām* to lift the curse of the *'adāmāh* is not Abram, the relief of the curse is commenced through him (12:3). After God calls Abram, he “blesses” him (12:2), thus distinguishing him from the cursed line of humanity (12:3), and commissions him to confer this blessing to “all the families of the *'adāmāh*” (12:3). Through Abram, the way for restored sonship and kingship, and the realization of the divine image and likeness, is opened.

### **1 Corinthians 15**

The curse of the ground is removed when those who “have borne the image of the man of dust” are transformed to “bear the image of the man of heaven” (15:49). Death is necessary to undergo this transformation (15:36). When transformed, humanity will achieve ontological realization - but not in a body like Adam’s. Rather, in a superior body that is endowed with the necessary sources for this existence (15:44).

### **Romans 8:18-23**

There is a glory which resurrected humanity will witness (8:18). It is not only

their own resurrection, but creation's redemption. Picking up on Isaiah's portrayal of the earth giving up its dead, Paul focuses on the benefit creation will experience upon humanity's resurrection: the graduation from "futility" and "bondage to corruption" (8:21) now that it no longer houses death nor endures improper dominion. Creation will at last achieve its telos.

### **Galatians 3:10-14**

Paul connects the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 with the work of Christ (3:13). The result is that the curse of the law, which is associated with the curse of the ground, is lifted. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit (3:14), humanity can increasingly realize its ontological realization and experience existential bliss.

## CHAPTER 2

### BLISSFUL HUMANITY

Jean-Paul Sartre declares that humans define themselves. In his words, “there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence - a being whose existence comes before its essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept of it... man is nothing other than what he makes of himself.”<sup>1</sup> This perspective is embraced by many today. But no person can define themselves; self-identity is a product of tradition and community – there is no such thing as a private self.<sup>2</sup> As a result, society has “no self at all. What seems to be a self is merely a series of social masks that change with each successive situation.”<sup>3</sup> The subsequent self-incoherency leads to a despondent malaise in life, as well as treating every relationship as “purely instrumental in their significance.”<sup>4</sup> There must be a better way forward, one that constructs a stable self that is independent of changing circumstances and communities, and one that moves us away from using other to blessing others. The way forward is by returning to the beginning, to the story of humanity’s origin. In doing so, one finds a satisfying explanation of the essence of humanity. This venture hinges upon one theme in Genesis: the relationship between man and the ground.

My goal in this chapter is to explain the purpose behind the close relationship

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, ed. John Kulka, trans. Carol Macomber (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: Finding God in the Modern World* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 127, Kindle.

<sup>3</sup> Robert N. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 80.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1998), 43.

between the *'ādām* (man) and the *ādāmāh*` (ground). It is not a coincidence that these words share a phonetic relationship, nor a lexical relationship, and their relationship is more than simply that the man's place of origin is the ground. Moses may have intended the relationship between *'ādām* and *ādāmāh*` to convey much more.

Moses uses the motif of *'ādām*-*ādāmāh*` to capture the essence of what it means to be human; I will refer to this as human ontology.<sup>5</sup> When I use the word “ontology,” I mean the composition of a human which harnesses the potential for existential bliss. The potential is realized on the basis of two constants: profound relationship with God and proper dominion in creation.<sup>6</sup> These two constants share a successive relationship with each other, where the first (relationship with God) sustains the second (dominion in creation). Thus, humanity must maintain relationship with God in order to achieve the full potential of its ontological composition. Conversely, when humanity is alienated from God, it is cut off from the source which authorizes realized ontological potential. The achievement and loss of realized ontological potential is traced throughout Genesis 1-12 by the *'ādām*-*ādāmāh*` motif.<sup>7</sup> But first, in Genesis 1:26-2:25, the *'ādām*-*ādāmāh*` motif conveys the original destiny of humanity with its experienced bliss, thus establishing the necessary components to realize ontological potential.

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony Hoekema provides the best definition of ontology when he writes that it is “both the structure of man (his gifts, capacities, and endowments) and the function of man (his actions, his relationships to God and to others, and the way he uses his gifts). To stress either of these at the expense of the other is to be one-sided.” Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 73.

<sup>6</sup> As it will be argued, the ontological composition of humans is the divine image and likeness that is embedded within them. Thus, within each person is the orientation towards the transcendent (the divine likeness) and towards meaningful activity (the divine image), and this orientation attains its telos when there is relationship with God which overflows into proper relationship with creation.

<sup>7</sup> Specifically, the arch covers the attainment of existential bliss in Genesis 1-2, the loss of existential bliss in Genesis chaps. 3-4, the purpose of deluge-judgment in Genesis chaps. 6-9, and its anticipated restoration in Genesis chaps. 5 and 12.

Additionally, a helpful illustration that captures the role of the *'ādām*-*ādāmāh*` motif in Genesis 1-12 is that it functions like coal for a locomotive. The coal burned and boiled water, which created steam, which in turn fueled the engine so that the train moved along. In the same way, the *'ādām*-*ādāmāh*` motif is loaded into the story at strategic points in order to move the story of humanity forward, through its uphill and downhill, twist and turn journey.

## Genesis 1:26-28: Human Ontology

The '*ādām*-'*ādāmāh*' motif first appears in Genesis 2:5-9. Yet, for it to serve its full purpose, one must first establish the meaning of a major concept which it relies upon: the divine image and likeness (1:26-27). Additionally, although the specific motif of '*ādām*-'*ādāmāh*' is not found in 1:28, the meaning of God's "blessing" and command to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion" (Gen. 1:28) are essential for the message of the '*ādām*-'*ādāmāh*' motif. When one understands what the divine image and likeness are in its socio-historical setting, along with the meaning of God's blessing and command in 1:28, the '*ādāmāh*' will serve as the literary vehicle by which these items are captioned.<sup>8</sup>

Genesis 1:26 records that God declares to the heavenly court that humanity will be in their image, after their likeness.<sup>9</sup> Humans are made in the "image" (*sèlèm*) and after the "likeness" (*demùt*) of God (1:26). The word *sèlèm* typically refers to a statue or idol that represents a divine entity in the world. The word *demùt* typically portrays the concept of comparison.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the preposition "in" (*be*) emphasizes proximity while "after" (*ke*) emphasizes something similar yet distinct.<sup>11</sup> This means man is precisely the representative of God on earth, and that man shares a similarity with God

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1 describes the creation event from a divine perspective while chap. 2 depicts the same creation event from a topographical perspective. Therefore, it is correct to allow the content of chap. 1 inform one's reading of chap. 2, understanding that chap. 2 is unpacking the broader ideas contained in chap. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Gentry explains that when God declares his intention to make man in his own image and likeness, he does so to the divine counsel. But in doing so God disenfranchises the divine counsel since it is humanity who will rule on behalf of God, not the counsel. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 22. See also Psalm 82 and 89:6-7 where God's interaction with the divine counsel is acknowledged and described. Patrick Miller also concludes that the first person plural forms in Genesis 1:26 do refer to the heavenly court, since Psalm eight does not allow the possibility of plural of self-deliberation alone. Patrick D. Miller, Jr, *Genesis 1-11: Studies in Structure and Theme*, Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 8 (Sheffield, England: The University of Sheffield, 1978), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Peter J. Gentry, *Biblical Studies*, (Peterborough, Canada: H&E Academic, 2020), 1:8-9. Gentry references Ezekiel 23:14-15 to prove that *sèlèm* and *demùt* are not synonymous. In Ezekiel 23:14-15, *sèlèm* refers to physical figures or images and *demùt* refers to relationship of the copy to the original.

<sup>11</sup> Gentry, *Biblical Studies*, 1:14.

but not exactness.<sup>12</sup> Further, in the ancient Near East, both the *Takulti-Ninurta Epic* and the Babylonian creation story of *Enuma Elish* employ image and likeness terminology to describe the king's special relationship as both a representative and son of his god.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, in the Ancient Near East, an idol was understood to be the mediation of divine presence in the world, where, during the preparatory cultic ritual, the idol would be infused with the divine presence.<sup>14</sup> If Moses is adopting terms that are culturally presumed, then it is likely that the reader is to understand “image” and “likeness” in the same manner as it is understood in the Ancient Near East. Humans are created to be sons of God as well as his representatives.

Genesis 5:3 further confirms this suggestion. Before, man is said to be “in” (*be*) the image of God and made “after” (*ke*) the likeness of God. Moses exchanges the prepositions that precede “likeness” and “image” in 5:3 when he records that Adam “fathered a son in (*be*) his own likeness, after (*ke*) his image.” Peter Gentry comments on the significance of this exchange: “Here Seth shares precisely in the matter of generation and sonship but is only similar and not identical in the representation of his father’s image to the rest of the world.”<sup>15</sup> This means Seth was created according to Adam’s kind, thus sharing a kinship with him, but does not perfectly represent him. If this is true, this helps the reader understand that *'ādām*, being created after the “likeness” of God, implies a kinship with God and thus he relates to God as a son to a father.<sup>16</sup> Also, since *'ādām* is

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<sup>12</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 192. Gentry also comments that the divine counsel was disenfranchised over God’s decision to appoint humans to this status rather than them. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 22.

<sup>13</sup> Catherine McDowell, “‘In the Image of God He Created Them:’ How Genesis 1:26-27 Defines the Divine-Human Relationship and Why it Matters” in *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 40-41.

<sup>14</sup> Marc Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in Light of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 109, Kindle.

<sup>15</sup> Gentry, *Biblical Studies*, 1:15.

<sup>16</sup> Gentry, *Biblical Studies*, 1:16.



made in the “image” of God, he represents God.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, since humanity is created in the divine image and likeness, there is within it embedded the instinct for fellowship with the divine (the divine likeness) as well as for meaningful activity (the divine image).

Further, to speak of the divine image and likeness is to speak of humanity’s ontological composition. So then, humanity’s ontological potential is realized in intimate relationship with God and in representation of him to creation and creatures. Said differently, human ontology is expressed through sonship (relationship) and through kingship (representation).<sup>18</sup> Taken together, one who is in the divine image and likeness is a being who interacts with the divine in such a way that naturally mediates the rule of heaven on earth. When the ontological potential of *’ādām* is realized, there is a forging between the human and divine world.<sup>19</sup>

Then, the commencement of ontological realization is portrayed in 1:28. Moses writes, “And God blessed (*brk*) them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” The same blessing (*brk*) and command is given to the animals in 1:22. The difference is

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<sup>17</sup> Gentry, *Biblical Studies*, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Relationship and representation are not the divine image and likeness itself, rather it is the result of being in the image and likeness of God. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 201.

<sup>19</sup> Miller, Jr, *Genesis 1-11*, 19. Miller writes, “If, then, the first person plural forms of Gen. 1:26 do refer to the heavenly court, the theologically significant fact is that the passage establishes a clear connection between the human world and the divine world in the creation of *’ādām*... when the narrative speaks of a close relationship between the divine world and human world and suggests that the human partakes of the divine in some fashion or does so potentially, then it refers not just to the deity but to the divine world, the divine beings.” Peter Gentry writes, “As servant king and son of God mankind will mediate God’s rule to the creation in the context of a covenantal relationship with God on the one hand and the earth on the other.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 201.

Genesis 2:4 confirms this statement. The genealogy in Genesis 2:4, which speaks of the offspring of “the heavens and the earth,” begins the narrative of the human pair’s creation and becomes the pattern for all the following human genealogies. It is significant that “heaven and earth” fill the slot where names are thereafter inserted. This is to show that the first human pair is the offspring of the creation of the heavens and earth. Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 63, Logos Bible Software. The global implications of this reality will be developed later in this chapter, as well as in chap. 6.

twofold. First, God speaks directly to the human pair when he blesses and commands them to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”<sup>20</sup> In fact, for the human pair to receive this “blessing” (*brk*) from God means that God has initiated favorable relationship, and the results of the blessing are secondary to the relationship.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, the human pair alone are told to exercise dominion over all creation. This pronounced blessing and commission characterizes the pristine position which humanity has amongst all creatures. Humanity alone relates to God on a personal basis, and humanity alone is given authority over creation; the reader is observing the ontological nature of *'ādām* take shape. L. Michael Morales expounds:

While being made in God’s image both qualified and commissioned Adam to rule caringly over the house of creation on God’s behalf, yet the chief delight and privilege of such likeness to God was in humanity’s unique ability to gaze heavenward, to lift our faces to God and relate to him – no other creature could enjoy such friendship with the Eternal.<sup>22</sup>

Now, with relationship with God and representation of God established, God then declares the entirety of his work as “very good” (1:31). This commendation is not focused on creation alone, but on the entire created order operating succinctly underneath the dominion of *'ādām*, who is in relationship with God. All is “very good” (1:31) when *'ādām* is expressing the fullness of his ontological potential, the divine image and likeness, through relational kinship with God and representational ruling for God.<sup>23</sup>

Moving forward into Genesis 2, Moses rewinds the story and narrates the successive sequences that lead up to the “very good” state of creation. Yet, this account is

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<sup>20</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1987), 33.

<sup>21</sup> Pennington later states that blessings are covenantal language. Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 48-49.

<sup>22</sup> L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 7, Kindle.

<sup>23</sup> K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 175, Logos Bible Software.

told from a topographical perspective that focuses on man. This alternative perspective of the creation of man is when the motif of the '*ādām*-'*ādāmāh*' emerges. Keeping in mind the realized ontological potential of '*ādām* through sonship and kingship, I will seek to establish a literary and conceptual connection between the '*ādām* and '*ādāmāh*'. If I achieve my aim, the reader should detect the progression towards existential bliss through the interplay between '*ādām* and '*ādāmāh*'.

### **Genesis 2:5-9: The Ground and Ontological Potential**

The origin of '*ādām* is the '*ādāmāh*', and the stage for the activity of '*ādām* is the '*ādāmāh*'. Together, they showcase the special relationship '*ādām* has with God and the unique role '*ādām* occupies as representative king. In so doing, humanity's ontological potential - the divine image and likeness - is realized and humanity's existential bliss is envisaged.

This is first evidenced by observing the various vegetation in 2:5-9. There are two different sets of vegetation; there is vegetation for animals and there is separate vegetation for humans. Both play an essential role in viewing the expression of the divine image and likeness.

First is the vegetation reserved for the animals. The land lacked both the "bush (*śīah*) of the field" and the "small plant (*ēšēb*) of the field" for two noted reasons: God had not caused it to rain and there was no '*ādām* to work the '*ādāmāh*' (2:5). In the parallel account,<sup>24</sup> God tells the human pair that the animals will eat "every green plant (*ēšēb*) for food" (1:30); these are the same plants that are translated as "small plant of the field" in 2:5 which cannot grow without irrigated ground and man working the ground. It is natural to surmise that the animals cannot eat without God's rain and man's tilling.

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<sup>24</sup> Derek Kidner rightly understands the narrative in Genesis 2 to parallel the creation account of Genesis 1, telling the account through a topological viewpoint. Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 58.

This means there is a partnership between God and man that brings about welfare for all creatures. Thus, the dynamic between the 'āḏām and the 'aḏāmāh` is signaling to the reader that man's dominion-exercising activity will be aided by provisional partnership with God.<sup>25</sup> Meaning, the dominion activity of 'āḏām on the 'aḏāmāh`, which provides food for subordinate creatures, is rendered possibly only by his partnership with God. The success of man's kingship through producing plants is promised by his sonship relationship with God. So then, the task that 'āḏām was given was not up to him to carry out alone; God would aid him. Already in the details about the land's preparation for man (2:5), the reader observes the design of the original human experience: dominion which blesses while in blessed partnership with God.

The second kind of vegetation is listed on the third day (1:11-12, "plants yielding seed," "fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed"), and it refers to a group of plants reserved exclusively for man's consumption. This is confirmed by the fact that the vegetation listed on the third day (1:11-12) matches the vegetation God gives exclusively to mankind to eat in 1:29. Furthermore, upon noticing the lexical continuity, it seems fitting to think that the trees ('ēš) that God caused to spring up from the 'aḏāmāh` in 2:9, which are pleasing to the eye and good for food, which includes the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, are the same trees ('ēš) that God refers to in 1:29. Thus, the vegetation in 1:11-12, 1:29 and 2:9 are all the same, and all are reserved exclusively for man to eat. A crucial detail is attributed to these trees: each are caused to spring up by God alone. This is explicit in 2:9, "And out of the 'aḏāmāh` the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." The 'aḏāmāh` shows that God unilaterally provides for man the sustenance that he will need, and this treatment is given to no other creature (recall that the food for the animals is dependent upon both man's tilling and God's rain). To enjoy these gifted trees is an

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<sup>25</sup> Derek Kidner, "Genesis 2:5, 6: Wet or Dry?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 17 (1966): 114.

expression of man's divine likeness since it shows his special relationship with God. Additionally, the divine image is given expression here too since the son's dominion activity resembles the Father's activity; in providing for 'ādām from the 'adāmāh', 'ādām learns to provide for subordinate creatures from the 'adāmāh'. It could be said that the natural consequence of the provisional relationship between 'ādām and God is that 'ādām exercises provisional ruling; the son is imaging the Father for the benefit of all. But, there are still more elements of the relationship 'ādām has to the 'adāmāh that communicate both the potential and realization of the original human ontology.

Moving on from the vegetation upon the 'adāmāh', the next sequence is the creation of 'ādām from the 'adāmāh', and it emphasizes the divine likeness of humanity.<sup>26</sup> Man's formation is from the "dust of the 'adāmāh'" (2:7); but when man is "formed" and "breathed" the "breath of life" into his nostrils by God, God is showing the unique regard he has for 'ādām.<sup>27</sup> Although animals are living creatures who also have the "breath of life" (7:22), they are not breathed into by God. The animals were formed in a moment (1:24 cf. 2:19), whereas man was gradually and deliberately formed.<sup>28</sup> The relationship between the 'ādām and the 'adāmāh suggests the unique relationship between God and man. It also shows how the divine likeness embedded within 'ādām is appeased - intimate sonship.

The last observation from 2:5-9 highlights how the interaction between God's abundance and man's response to it sows the necessary seeds which could blossom forth

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<sup>26</sup> Here the inextricable link between 'ādām and the 'adāmāh is introduced, and it will illuminate the meaning of 2:18-22; 3:17-19, 23; chap. 4; 5:29; chaps. 6-7; chap. 9; 12:1-3. As the linguistic and conceptual continuity between these respective passages is explored, I will also argue that these passages guide the reader through the digression of humanity's ontological experience, following its bliss to its loss, while giving attention to the expectation that there will be redemption of the human ontological experience.

<sup>27</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 195-96. Kidner notes the special attention that only man receives here. Kidner, *Genesis*, 60.

<sup>28</sup> John Calvin and John King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 111, Logos Bible Software.

into complete existential bliss. In 2:8, the Lord plants a garden in the east of Eden, and that is where 'āḏām would reside and work. The reader is to imagine a garden contained in the eastern sector of a region called “Eden.” It seems that the ground which 'āḏām was formed from (2:7), which nothing had sprung up from due to lack of irrigation and tilling (2:5), is the topography that is designated as “Eden.” Eden is an uninhabitable topography, void of vegetation and unfit for 'āḏām. But in the eastern sector of Eden is the garden planted by God. In 2:9, the reader discovers the distinguishing feature of this garden; in it is the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, along with “every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food” (2:9). In the garden were the only trees and fruit of its kind; they would not be found outside the garden.<sup>29</sup> So then, in the east of the uninhabitable topography called “Eden” is a lush garden already sown and grown by God for 'āḏām.<sup>30</sup> The garden is a sanctuary designed perfectly for humanity’s delight. When all these details collate together, it seems that the garden is to be the base of operations for 'āḏām. As 'āḏām works the uninhabitable ground of Eden, with God’s help, so that vegetation for the animals to spring up, thus blessing creature and generating creation, he will return to his arboreal home for rest and replenishment.<sup>31</sup> The 'adāmāh`

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<sup>29</sup> John Sailhamer argues that the 'è'rès, which is translated as “earth” in the ESV, is better translated as “land.” He writes, “‘Land’ is a better translation than ‘earth’ for the Hebrew term 'è'rès because the term ‘land’ extends only to what we see of the earth around us, what is within our horizons... The sense of the term ‘land’ in that passage is clearly local and geographical.” John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* (Sisters, NY: Multnomah Books, 1996, 49-50). This is important for the argument of this chapter. If 'è'rès means “all the earth” in 1:29, rather than “all the land,” then the proposition that the garden exclusively contained the trees and fruit of its kind (2:9) as well as “every plant yielding seed” (1:29) as a gift from God to man - apart from any work on man’s part - would not be coherent. But if 'è'rès is better translated as “land,” then 1:29 corroborates with 2:9 very well. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 49-50.

That the vegetation in the garden would not be found outside of it is confirmed by God’s judgment of expulsion of Adam in 3:17-19; Adam will eat the “plants of the field” with difficulty, he will no longer eat the trees that are pleasant for sight and good for food.

<sup>30</sup> Morales agrees with this conclusion: “God personally formed Adam’s body, breathed into him the breath of life, brought him into paradise, a well-watered garden filled with life-giving fruit.” Morales, *Exodus Old and New*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 82, Logos Bible Software.

is not only the origin of *'ādām*, but it is also the origin of everything that makes his existence enjoyable and prosperous – it signals to the reader the blissful conditions of residence in Eden. Man would perform his function of exercising dominion in a place that was aesthetically pleasing, all while being sustained by good food (2:9). Yet, within the garden are two conspicuous trees that God created from the *'adāmāh*'; they are the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The “tree of life” would give *'ādām* immortality, and the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” would give *'ādām* access to counsel with God.

At this point in the account, the word *'adāmāh*` serves as the hinge upon which the ontological potential of *'ādām* is caricaturized and serves as the mechanism which moves him towards bliss.<sup>32</sup> Yet, existential bliss is contingent upon whether or not *'ādām* will remain content with God’s garden gift and its suited restrictions. If he is discontent, and acts upon it, then he will lose access to the garden and its assets. Hypothetically, upon losing these resources, humanity’s ontological potential would go unfulfilled.

### **Genesis 2:15-17: The Contingency of Realized Human Ontology**

With the *'ādām*-*'adāmāh*` motif already heavily used in 2:5-9, Moses expects the reader to retain this literary convention as an interpretive paradigm in the unfolding narrative.<sup>33</sup> This is only natural, since as the reader continues to 2:15-17, although the *'adāmāh*` is not specifically mentioned, there is continuity between 2:15-17 and 2:5-9. In

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<sup>32</sup> It may be worth noting that in Genesis 2:5-9, the ontological potential of *'ādām* is realized only in regard to his divine likeness. From his beginning, *'ādām* interacts with God in a meaningful way, which fulfills the potential of his divine likeness through sonship. Thus far in the narrative, *'ādām* has not exercised his dominion activity, it has only been alluded to in the preparation of the land. This means the harnessed potential of the divine image which is realized in ruling has not actualized yet in the narrative. Therefore, the reader is waiting to observe the realization of man’s ontological potential in regard to his divine image. This could possibly reinforce an existential truth: humanity will flourish in activity over creation only if they first flourish in relationship with God. The potential to experience bliss in ruling follows the realized ontological potential of relationship with the transcendent. Said succinctly: work follows rest, representation of God follows relationship with God.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 60.

2:5, the *'ādām* “works” (*'bd*) the *'adāmāh`* in order to produce plants for the animals to consume (2:5), and in 2:15, the *'ādām* is put in the garden to “work” (*'bd*) it. Thus, there is a lexical link between the two passages. Beyond this, the *'adāmāh`* is also the origin of all that is pleasing to the eye and good for food, including the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:9), both of which appear in 2:16-17. So then, the responsibility to “work” (*'bd*) the *'adāmāh`*, as well as these gifts from the *'adāmāh`*, remain as categories which will lend expression to the divine image and likeness of the *'ādām*. But that is not all; moving forward, these two categories will share an interdependent relationship, where the gifts of the *'adāmāh`* must be stewarded properly by *'ādām* so that he can successfully work the *'adāmāh`*.

The verb pair of “work” and “keep” in 2:15 is seen elsewhere in the Torah to depict either “serving” and “obeying” God’s word, or a Levite who “keeps” the “service” of the tabernacle.<sup>34</sup> Since Moses used this word pairing later to convey managing a sacred space, man’s activity in 2:15 should be understood similarly. His gardening is more than meets the eye; he is managing a garden-temple by maintaining its order and purity in contrast to the outside disorder and uncleanness. Moreover, this garden management is the means to accomplishing a global enterprise - one that is revealed in 1:28; “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion.”<sup>35</sup> If 2:15 is an expansion of what is observed in 2:5, and Genesis 1 is a parallel account to Genesis 2, where both are describing the same event from a different vantage point, then it is reasonable to conclude that the activity of “working and keeping” in 2:15 and tilling the soil in 2:5 is synonymous with exercising dominion and subduing the earth in 1:28. With this telic vision attached to the duty of *'ādām* over the *'adāmāh`*, it reasons to conclude

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<sup>34</sup> Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 81.

<sup>35</sup> John H. Walton, *Genesis: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 174.



that the boundaries of the garden are extended by cultivating (“work,” 2:15) the ground while maintaining its purity and integrity through guarding (“keep,” 2:15).<sup>36</sup> The purpose of this enterprise is that the entire earth would be the venue of God’s fellowship with *’ādām*, with all creation and creatures thriving under humanity’s regal care.<sup>37</sup> With this in mind, the man’s function over the *’adāmāh*’ is the critical component to God’s enterprise in 1:28.

Yet, there is one more component to this garden-expansion enterprise; *’ādām* does so in obedience to God. This is another iteration, albeit a heightened iteration, of the partnership already evidenced between *’ādām* and God. Previously, this partnership is observed through man’s gardening the *’adāmāh*’ alongside God’s rain upon the *’adāmāh*’ to bring about food for the animals (2:5-6). It is also observed through the resources which God makes to spring from the *’adāmāh*’, which enable *’ādām* to fulfill his dominion task (2:8-9). Now, this partnership reaches its epitome in the relationship *’ādām* has to the tree of knowledge of good and evil which comes from the *’adāmāh*’ (2:9). If *’ādām* trusts God’s sovereign partnership at the tree of knowledge, then he will retain access to God’s presence, to the tree of life, and succeed in his enterprise (1:28). This will ensure the fulfillment of his ontological potential, and he will experience bliss. If *’ādām* breaks trust, then he will “surely die” (2:17).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> It is plausible that as the boundaries of the garden extend outward, God would continually cause to grow other trees which bear fruit, which are pleasing to the eye and good for food, and possibly even other trees of life and trees of knowledge. Adam does not contribute to the existence of these trees – they are God’s project alone, which could progress in correspondence with the garden’s boundary.

<sup>37</sup> Walton, *Genesis*, 186. This conclusion is verified by later OT authors’ anticipation of worldwide subjugation and divine covering (Hab. 2:14; Is. 11:9, 45:18; Ps 8).

<sup>38</sup> Death does not primarily refer to *’ādām* perishing, it primarily refers to the felt experience of life apart from God’s presence and favor. Brueggemann says, “This is not a reflection on death, but on the troubled, anxiety-ridden life.” Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1982), 41, Kindle. This is confirmed by Genesis 3:24, where God drives the human pair out of the garden and keeps them from the tree of life. They do not immediately die, but they lose access to the provisions that would allow their divine image and likeness to reach their full potential. Outside the garden, away from the tree of life, they would not have access to God’s presence and favor, and they would no longer have opportunity for immortality.

So then, ontological realization and existential bliss is contingent upon Adam's dynamic with the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is critical, then, to understand the meaning of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is a place where God would judicially announce his will and order.<sup>39</sup> In searching the OT for a verb preceding the two nouns "good" and "evil," there are several instances where this formula appears. Synthesizing these instances together conveys the idea that the tree of knowledge of good and evil is a place of judicial decree.

In 1 Kings 3:9, Solomon asks God for an understanding mind to govern Israel and discern between "good" (*tôb*) and "evil" (*rà'*). Later, after Solomon demonstrates his judicial wisdom, Israel "perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice" (1 Kings 3:28). To judge between good and evil is thus understood to be a divine characteristic.<sup>40</sup> This same concept is repeated in 2 Samuel 14:17, where David is told that he is like a messenger of God "to discern good and evil." It appears that the insight David has is understood as an extension of the divine. In both instances, the king's judgement is understood as the decision of God.<sup>41</sup> To add, "good (*tôb*) or bad (*rà'*)" is used in the judicial setting of 2 Samuel 13:22, where Absalom's refuses to prosecute Amnon.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the interpreter can observe the judicial sense of this phrase in

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<sup>39</sup> W. Malcom Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 3 (1969): 266-278.

<sup>40</sup> Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3," 267-68.

<sup>41</sup> Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3," 269.

<sup>42</sup> Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3," 274. Other references could be Isaiah 5:20, where the terms "good" and "evil" refer to a judge's decision; 1 Kings 22:18, where the terms "good" and "evil" refer to a prophet's affirming or discouraging oracle concerning the outcome of a battle; Jeremiah 42:6 where the terms "good" and "evil" refer to God's decree concerning Israel's flight to Egypt. Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3," 272-73. Since the phrase "good and evil" seems to refer not simply to general knowledge but ability to render a judgment, it is not surprising that Moses speaks of the younger generation who will inherit the promised land as those who "have not known today good and evil" (Deut 1:39); meaning, the younger generation is innocent of the guilt that the older generation was guilty of, because they were not of age to make responsible decisions.

Isaiah 5:20, where Isaiah pronounces a woe to the judges who purposefully give false judgements.<sup>43</sup> Altogether, it appears that these phrases indicate a spoken decision where “good” and “evil” refer to alternative decisions.<sup>44</sup>

To make the pronouncement of “good” or “evil” is seen to be a divine action (recall 2 Sam 14:17; 1 Kings 3:28). This is confirmed by the serpent’s claim in Genesis 3:5, that the man and woman would “become like God, knowing good and evil.” This does not mean that man had increased in knowledge that he did not have before, or that he experienced evil in addition to good. This means *'ādām* acted in moral autonomy by deciding, in contradiction to God’s decree, what was good.<sup>45</sup> What the reader should understand by the tree of knowledge of good and evil is not a tree that, upon eating, gives a person moral knowledge, but rather a place where God makes judicial pronouncements between alternatives; “good” and “evil.” Said another way, the tree of knowledge of good and evil describes not a fruit to eat but a place of consultation. The travesty of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge does not consist in the content of the fruit but in the transgression of the command. Instead of listening to the voice of God, *'ādām* listened to the voice of his wife (3:17), and in the act of deciding to choose what was contrary to God’s decree, *'ādām* stepped into the role of God as the moral arbiter (3:22).

The reason this is crucial for the role of *'ādām* as a manager of the garden is this: as long as *'ādām* performed his task in accordance to God’s declared counsel, he could be confident that the integrity of his relationship with God and the integrity of the regal operation would endure. The entire picture is that as *'ādām* worked the soil,

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<sup>43</sup> Clark, “A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of ‘Good and Evil’ in Genesis 2-3,” 271. See also Isaiah 5:20; “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” The phrase, “good and evil,” is clearly not general moral knowledge, but specific moral declarations.

<sup>44</sup> Clark, “A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of ‘Good and Evil’ in Genesis 2-3,” 274.

<sup>45</sup> Clark, “A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of ‘Good and Evil’ in Genesis 2-3,” 277.

produced food for the animals, managed the care and safety of the garden, all according to God's judgment, the boundaries of the garden would increase and the whole world would be under God's dominion through his obedient son and vice-regent.<sup>46</sup> But this program is contingent upon '*ādām*' trusting God's counsel and restrictions. He would need to trust that the food God has expressly permitted for consumption is sufficient to sustain him in his venture.<sup>47</sup> The placement of verse sixteen after verse fifteen is no coincidence: man's activity as gardener and guardian (2:15) is directed by God's judgement at the tree of knowledge of good and evil (2:16).<sup>48</sup> The result of working and keeping alongside God's commandments would be an expanding garden that is safe from any threat that does not conform to God's garden will.<sup>49</sup>

So then, given man's task over the garden and his observance of God's judgement at the tree of knowledge, both of which are already associated with the '*ādāmāh*' (cf. 2:5-9), it would seem the divine image and likeness is on display. The '*ādām*' is a king who exercises dominion over the '*ādāmāh*' in order to advance God's rule while maintaining integrity of relationship through trust and obedience as a son. But the dominion activity of '*ādām*' expands beyond tilling the '*ādāmāh*' itself; the following sequence in the narrative shows that dominion extends to that which comes from both the '*ādāmāh*' (the animals) and the '*ādām*' (the woman).

### **Genesis 2:18-25: The Climactic, Blissful Ontological Realization**

The next sequence begins with man's loneliness (2:18). Moses notes that '*ādām*' did not find a corresponding partner amongst the animals. Apparently, the human

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<sup>46</sup> Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 396.

<sup>47</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 213.

<sup>48</sup> Beale argues that this activity is the function of God's command to subdue and take dominion in 1:28. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 83.

<sup>49</sup> Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 87.

ontology is not yet fulfilled – there is something absent. But before the reader moves to the building of the woman, the activity which *'ādām* displays over the animals must be interpreted within the backdrop of what has preceded it. In doing so, I propose that the scene of man's interaction with the animals is an installment in the pattern of the *'ādām*-*'adāmāh*` motif. Upon revealing the significance of its re-surfacing in the segment of the story concerning *'ādām* and the animals, the reader is primed for the final installment in the *'ādām*-*'adāmāh*` motif of chapter 2; the marriage of *'iš*` (man) and *'iššā(h)* (woman).

Thus far, I have argued that the divine image and likeness has been expressed through the interaction *'ādām* has with the *'adāmāh*`. He originates from the *'adāmāh*`, and he is formed by God slowly, carefully and intimately. He tills the *'adāmāh*` to bring forth vegetation for the animals with God's help (2:5). He enjoys God's garden-gift which comes from the *'adāmāh*` (2:8-9). The divine image and likeness is expressed once again as *'ādām* “works” and “keeps” the garden in partnership with God's judicial decree (2:15-16). This same pairing of the dominion activity of *'ādām* with God's partnership is evidenced again in 2:19-20. What occurs in 2:19-20 sets the stage for the climactic expression of human ontological potential, and in turn, showcases the height of human existential bliss.

As the reader approaches 2:19, they should notice an echo of 2:9; “now out of the *'adāmāh*`, the Lord God,” followed by a verb. This alerts the reader to notice associations between the two sequences. Previously in 2:9, I suggested that the nourishing trees and the tree of life and tree of knowledge were grown by God alone and gifted to *'ādām* to aid him in his human responsibility to represent God. In that passage, the special attention God gives to *'ādām* highlights his sonship (divine likeness) and the responsibility highlights his kingship (divine image). In 2:19, I propose that the phrase “now out of the *'adāmāh*`,” is meant to prepare the reader to observe another iteration of the sonship and kingship of *'ādām*. Yet, in this sequence, the expression of man's dominion over the *'adāmāh*`, is broadened. Whereas before the extent of man's

relationship to the ‘*adāmāh*’ was tilling and managing the vegetation that came from it, now it is enlarged to include creatures which originate from the ‘*adāmāh*’.

Next, God “brought” (2:19) the animals to the ‘*ādām*’. This reinforces the concept that God shows his unique relationship with ‘*ādām*’ in the way he provides for him and partners with him in dominion activity. This is especially probable considering what takes place subsequently. After God brings the animals to the man, ‘*ādām*’ names them; this is an expression of his divine image.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, since 1:28 explicitly states humanity’s dominion will be over the animals, the reader should understand Adam’s naming of the animals to be included in this commission. So, the reader should take notice; the divine image and likeness is signaled by partnership with God in naming the animals which have come from the ‘*adāmāh*’. But in doing this task, ‘*ādām*’ felt a frustration; he was without another who corresponded to him.

Adam has no ability to relieve this frustration. But again, just how God unilaterally brought up the trees from the ‘*adāmāh*’ for the benefit of ‘*ādām*’ (2:9), and just how God created the animals from the ‘*adāmāh*’ and brought them to ‘*ādām*’ so he could exercise dominion (2:19), God unilaterally acts and brings ‘*ādām*’ another gift, as from a father to a son, that will benefit him in his dominion exercising. Moses records the creation and presentation of the woman to the man in such a way that emphatically parallels the previous sequences of the ‘*ādām*’ - ‘*adāmāh*’ motif.

The first parallel is situational. In observing the commonalities between the giving of the garden and the giving of the woman, ‘*ādām*’ is passive in both instances. Just as ‘*ādām*’ played no role in the garden’s planting, and just as he was placed there by God

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<sup>50</sup> Beale writes, “Adam’s speaking and naming of the animals (Gen. 2:19) expresses part of his rule over the creation and reflects God’s naming of parts of creation in Genesis one through his creative speech.” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 83. It is plausible that ‘*ādām*’ would have named the serpent and known the serpent since he “gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field (2:20 cf. 3:1).” If this is the case, then it appears that ‘*ādām*’ at one time exercised dominion but failed to do so faithfully. To add, his passivity (3:6) is what prepared and persisted the serpent’s subversion of the created order. I will explore this in the following chapter.

(2:8), so in the instance with the woman; *'ādām* was put to sleep (2:21). Both the garden and the woman were a gift to *'ādām* that he did not merit.

The second parallel is a play on words. In 2:9, every tree that was pleasant, the tree of life, and tree of knowledge all originated from the *'adāmāh*` (2:9). In 2:21-22, the woman originates from the *'ādām*. I contend it is no coincidence that both the garden with its assorted trees, which would make man's existence blissful and his royal task successful, and the woman's creation, which would enrich man's existence and aid him in his royal task, both come from words that share a semantic and oratory similarity. Additionally, it appears that *'ādām* recognizes this connection when he names the woman. He names her *'iššā(h)* because she came from *'iš*` (2:23). Therefore, the play on words taking place between *'ādām* and *'adāmāh*` and *'iššā(h)* and *'iš*` is purposeful. I propose that this instance of *'ādām* naming his wife in a similar way to how he derived his own name shows that he is aware of these connections. Moreover, it is evident that Moses intends for the reader to see the connection between the man's origin and the woman's origin by using the same verb to describe how they derived from their respective sources; in both 2:23 and 3:19, each was "taken" (*lqh*) from the *'ādām* and the *'adāmāh*`.

Beyond these aforementioned parallels in 2:8-9 and 2:21-22, there are interpretively crucial intertextual connections between man's interaction with the animals in 2:19-20 and his initial interaction with the woman in 2:21-23. In the sequence where the animals were made from the *'adāmāh*` (2:19), the reader is told that God "brought them to the man." Adam then proceeds to name them, which is a function of his dominion duty (2:20 cf. 1:28). In the sequence where the woman is taken from the *'ādām* (2:22), the reader is told that God "brought her to the man." Adam proceeds to name her "woman" (2:23). Due to this textual repetition, it seems that Moses wants the reader to understand that the same dominion *'ādām* expresses over the animals who come from the *'adāmāh*`, he now expresses over the woman who comes from the *'ādām*. Yet, the

dominion expressed towards the animals is not quite the same as the dominion expressed towards the woman.

First, the dominion expressed towards the woman is uniquely fulfilling. Adam's interaction with the animals leaves him incomplete. Not so in his interaction with the woman. The detail and number of words used to name the woman is quantitatively and qualitatively greater than when *'ādām* names the animals; his naming of her is a celebration of song.<sup>51</sup> The woman's existence is the conclusion of man's loneliness.

Second, the dominion expressed towards the woman is characterized by equality, correspondence and responsibility. The woman is taken from the side of the man. This is not arbitrary; the reader should see that she is an equal counterpart to man, and the man exalts in their complimentary correspondence in 2:23.<sup>52</sup> This event is followed by the author's own commentary. Moses states that man is the one who leaves father and mother; he is to take primary responsibility for his counterpart through sacrificial leadership (2:24). God's image bearers will exercise dominion in a complementary relationship, where the man is functioning as sacrificial leader and the wife is functioning as protected and cared for counterpart. When man and woman properly relate to one another according to their respective personhood, they experience bliss. This is what 2:25 adds; "and the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed (1:25)." It is as if the author is highlighting the human pair's naked shamelessness to capture the innocence and pure joy of their human existence. What the reader must keep in mind in interpreting this statement is not only the human pair's untainted relationship with one another, but also their untainted relationship with God. It

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<sup>51</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 69.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew Henry captures the poetic effect of the woman's origin in man's rib: "Not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 10.



is when the man and woman are observing the will of God revealed at the tree of knowledge, as well as performing their dominion task of garden-expansion with his help, and residing in the pleasing environment of the garden, that they are able to live in a constant state of innocence and shamelessness.<sup>53</sup> The divine likeness (sonship) is on display as the human pair enjoy close relationship with God. The divine image (dominion) is on display as the human pair function according to their respective roles in the dominion enterprise (see 1:28).

With the harnessed potential of the human ontology realized to its maximum capacity, life in the garden captures what existence is supposed to be. As long as the human pair remain in obedient relationship to God, they will retain access to God and all the garden resources, thus continually realizing the potential of their ontological composition. If they break trust, then innocence will be replaced by guilt, and the fabric of the very good creation will begin to unravel (1:31), starting with the man and his wife, then with the human pair and God. The human experience would become stunted as the divine image and divine likeness fall short of full expression. This is what follows, and the '*adāmāh*' will be the hinge-point for the drama of humanity's existential frustration.

### **Conclusion**

Thus far, Moses has captured the ontological composition of humanity through the motif of '*ādām*' - '*adāmāh*'. The '*adāmāh*' is used to demonstrate man's divine likeness as it exemplifies his unique relationship with God. First, it was in the way '*ādām*' was intimately and carefully formed from the ground. Secondly, it was in the way that man's tilling was aided by God's help. Thirdly, it was in the way that '*ādām*' was given all that comes from the '*adāmāh*' for his enjoyment, replenishment and guidance in his

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<sup>53</sup> This is proven by the result of disobeying God's command to not eat of the tree of knowledge; the man and woman immediately feel shame due to their nakedness and hide themselves from God (Gen 3:7-8).

royal duty. The ‘*adāmāh*’ also serves as the means by which ‘*ādām*’ expressed his divine image as royal representative. He works the ‘*adāmāh*’ to tether heaven to earth, and he works the ‘*adāmāh*’ to manage and protect the boundaries of the expanding garden. He exercises dominion over the animals who come from the ‘*adāmāh*’ and who were brought to him. Lastly, ‘*ādām*’ exercises loving dominion over his wife who comes from the ‘*ādām*’ and was brought to him. After ‘*ādām*’ is united to his wife, they are both naked and without shame. All these movements crescendo into the existential bliss of original humanity. The final product of God’s creative work, the “very good” creation (1:31), is described as such because God observes ‘*ādām*’ exercising dominion to the benefit of all creation, with his wife alongside him, and in uncompromised relationship with himself.<sup>54</sup> This “very good” creation would certainly include the realized ontological potential of humanity that bears the fruit of existential bliss.

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<sup>54</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 175.

### CHAPTER 3

#### LANGUISHING HUMANITY

Modern medicine has increased the longevity of human life. In the eighteenth century, four out of five people died before the age of seventy. Now, the average life expectancy is nearly eighty.<sup>1</sup> Although these innovations are a common grace to humanity, they are telling of our resistance to death. Surgeon Atul Gawande reports that the United States Medicare system spend one-quarter of its budget on “the five percent of patients who are in their final year of life, and most of that money goes for care in their last couple of months that is of little apparent benefit.”<sup>2</sup> The motivation behind these reports is our contempt for death. Humanity scorns death because it guts life of its purpose, relativizing all accomplishments; “That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been” (Eccl 3:15).

Death was promised if the first man disobeyed and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17), and this promise is confirmed in God’s cursing of the ‘*ādāmāh*’ (Gen 3:19). But ‘*ādām*’ did not immediately die upon his disobedience. Rather, death manifests immediately in the form of God’s absence, and so too the garden’s. It is these two versions of death that compose the frustration of the human experience.

I propose that the curse of the ground in Genesis 3:17-19 is to be understood as more than merely a cursing of the ground; the curse signals a negative shift in humanity’s existence. The negative shift is characterized by the interplay between the ‘*ādām*’ and the

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew McCullough, *Remember Death: The Surprising Path to Living Hope* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 39.

<sup>2</sup> Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2014), 153.

‘*adāmāh*’. Later OT authors confirm this idea as they use language reminiscent of the cursing of the ground to explain the anguish of man’s existence. In summary, the cursing of the ground is the hallmark framework for describing human existential anguish.

### **Genesis 3:1-7: Dereliction Inherits Death**

Before I focus on the curse of the ground (3:17-19), I will briefly recount the disobedience that brought about the judgment. Without establishing the significance of Adam’s disobedience (3:1-7), the reader will miss the rationale of God’s cursing of the ground. But also, in order to understand the significance of Adam’s disobedience, its portrayal in Genesis 3:1-7 must be analyzed in light of the details of Genesis 2. Just before Adam’s disobedience, he was exercising dominion over the ‘*adāmāh*’ and all that came from the ‘*adāmāh*’, which included his wife and creatures. With this context in mind, the reader will perceive the dereliction of ‘*ādām*’.

Genesis 3 opens with a serpent from outside the garden making its way into the garden. The serpent is categorized as one of the “beasts of the field” (3:1). The next sequence is meant to shock the reader: “He (the serpent) said to the woman” (3:1). This statement evidences five issues, all regarding the man’s failure.

First, ‘*ādām*’ is to “work and keep” the ‘*adāmāh*’ in observance of God’s instruction and judicial decree (2:15). As previously argued, to “work and keep” is activity that Moses uses to describe the activity of priests in the tabernacle, where they would manage the sacred space. The man’s work on the ‘*adāmāh*’ includes protecting the garden.<sup>3</sup> If he were to discover a serpent of the field inside the sacred space, his duty is to consult God at the tree of knowledge to receive divine judgment concerning the serpent.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 83, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), chap. 2, sec. 2.1, para. 1, Kindle. See also W. Malcom Clark, “A Legal Background to the Yahwehists Use of ‘Good and Evil’ in Genesis 2-3.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88,

Instead, 'āḏām permitted the serpent to remain in the garden and approach his wife. The second issue is that 'āḏām has likely already expressed his dominion by naming every beast of the field, alongside the aid of God: “the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name” (2:19). This means 'āḏām has already demonstrated superiority over the serpent, and for him to permit the serpent's entrance and seduction is an abdication of his rightful place in the creation order. Third, since man's task as obedient manager of the garden temple is a task he initially carried out alone, without the woman, it would be his duty to teach his wife the decreed will of God concerning order in the garden. Since the serpent approached the woman and she did not exercise dominion over it, it is plausible that 'āḏām failed to faithfully teach his wife God's spoken will. Fourth, 'āḏām stood by passively while the serpent subverted the created order (3:6). He did not silence it and forbid it from speaking. The following shame, distortion of gender roles, and introduction of existential anguish is due to the man's passivity in his responsibility over what comes from the 'adāmāh` (garden and animals) and what comes from the 'āḏām (the woman). Lastly, in the act of eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the human pair defied God's law and asserted themselves as their own moral arbiter. The passivity of 'āḏām crosses into treason in the act of eating the forbidden fruit. The failure of 'āḏām prepared the way for the definitive act of disobedience and the resulting expulsion (3:24).

### **Genesis 3:17-19: Death Inherits Difficulty**

The curse of the ground is paradigmatic for an entire way of thinking by later biblical authors. If the reader is to see the connections in later literature, they must first

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no. 3 (1969): 266-278.

understand the foundational passage.

Throughout Genesis 2, the ‘*adāmāh*’ signals the realization of human ontological potential and its proceeding existential bliss, and in 3:17-19 the ‘*adāmāh*’ signals the impending loss of realized ontology and the expected diminishment of human bliss. This is observed first in the reversal of Genesis 2:5-9 in 3:17-18. Once the ground is cursed, God tells Adam that he will eat of it in “pain” all his days (3:17). The following verse further explains why: “thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field” (3:18). Recall that before, God’s sending of rain caused the plants of the field to “spring up” (*yismāh*’, root *smh*) from the ‘*adāmāh*’ (2:5), and by God’s power he caused every pleasing tree to “spring up” (*yāsmāh*’, root *smh*).<sup>5</sup> In the cursing of the ‘*adāmāh*’, rather than plants and trees springing up from the ground, now “thorns and thistles it shall bring forth (*tasmīha*’, root *smh*) for you” (3:18). This foretells the loss of God’s provisional aid and the banishment to the region of Eden outside the garden boundary. Outward, on the same soil that Adam would cultivate with God’s help (2:5) and eventually subdue entirely (1:28), he will encounter thorns and thistles. The memory of God’s provisional aid, with its potential to tether heaven to earth (1:28 cf. 2:15), will haunt him as thorns and thistles, not vegetation, arise before his eyes and weary his hands.<sup>6</sup> The relationship ‘*ādām*’ enjoys with God, which overflows into successful dominion, is fragmented.

Furthermore, the formation of ‘*ādām*’ from the dust of the ‘*adāmāh*’ in 2:7, which signals the intimacy between God and man, is matched by a corresponding negative movement, signaled by the ‘*adāmāh*’ in 3:19. In 2:7, man is given special attention in his creation.<sup>7</sup> In 3:19, man is told he will “return to the ‘*adāmāh*’.” Moses

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<sup>5</sup> It is as if God’s presence houses the power of life that is contagious and surges out from him. His presence populates the surrounding area with life as vitality overflows from him.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1987), 82.

<sup>7</sup> K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville:

then gives God's explanation: "for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (3:19b). The same soil which captured the contact 'ādām had with heaven will now capture his undivided interaction with the earth.

The curse of the ground strips away the significance of man's formation from the 'adāmāh' and the telos of activity upon the 'adāmāh'. Divine fellowship is damaged by the death of exile from God's garden-presence. The dominion project will be frustrated by frailty, difficulty, and finally interrupted by death. The 'adāmāh' defines the 'ādām; before sin, it defined his prestigious existence, and after sin, it will define his existential despair. The divine image and likeness embedded in man will be frustrated as neither reaches full capacity.<sup>8</sup> Said differently, without access to God's presence, and without the resources of the garden, the necessary items for 'ādām to realize his harnessed ontological potential are absent.

This existential anguish is not reserved for the historical Adam alone; all humanity will suffer the reality of the unrealized divine image and likeness. The later biblical authors retain awareness of Genesis 3:17-19 and employ it to capture the anguish of human life.

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Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 195-96, Logos Bible Software. The closeness between God and man demonstrates the unique relationship. Although animals are living creatures who also have the "breath of life" (7:22), they are not breathed into by God. Kidner notes the special activity that only man receives here. Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 60. John Calvin claims that the animals were formed in a moment (1:24 cf. 2:19), where man was gradually formed. John Calvin and John King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 111, Logos Bible Software.

As for what I mean by "global and immortal glories," I alluded to previously in chap. 2 when discussing the final goal of the dominion project. I will discuss more in chap. 6 as well.

<sup>8</sup> Morales comments: "Possessing the divine gift of a rational soul with its wondrous and fearful capacity to relate to God, set apart from all other creatures in being created in his divine image and likeness, human beings, whose natures are now deeply bent by the principle of sin... squander the divine gift of life, of the soul's noble openness to the Infinite... And yet there is nothing within creation itself that can fulfill our soul's capacity and longing to have fellowship with the One who transcends the night sky and all the works of his hands." L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 8-9, Kindle.

## Later Scripture: Life is Toil and Affliction

Later biblical texts will allude to the cursing of the ground, and in so doing, I contend that they recognize existential despair to be a result of this curse. In examining the OT, I find that the exact words located in Genesis 3:17-19 are used by later authors. Moreover, beyond linguistic connections between these texts, there is a sustained thought pattern which is observable through conceptual allusions.<sup>9</sup> The biblical authors embraced the reality of the curse of the ground so deeply that key words and imagery from Genesis 3:17-19 and its surrounding context frame their understanding of their own existential difficulty.<sup>10</sup>

### Job 3-5

The author of Job uses the words “trouble” (*‘āmēl*) and “affliction” (*‘a`wèn*) to depict the anguish of life. These terms are within the near scope of other language which directly references Genesis 3:17-19, such as “curse” (*‘rr*, 3:8), “bread” (*lè`hèm*, 3:25), “dust” (*‘āpār`*, 5:6; 34:15), “sprout” (*yismáh`*, 5:6), “ground” (*‘adāmāh*, 5:6), and “man” (*‘ādām*, 5:7). Therefore, it seems that when the author describes difficulty in life with the terms “trouble” (*‘āmēl*) and “affliction” (*‘a`wèn*), he has in mind the human experience caused by the cursing of the ground - the frustration of unrealized human ontology.

Beginning in chapter 3, Job, in the midst of his suffering, laments the day of his birth. He wishes the day he was born would never have seen the light of day (Job 3:1-9) because now his “trouble” (*‘āmēl*) will not be hidden from his eyes (3:10). It would have been better for him to stay in the womb than to enter into life because life is “trouble.”<sup>11</sup> He then questions why “light is given to him who is in ‘misery’ (*‘āmēl*) ...

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<sup>9</sup> Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgment*, chap. 2, sec. 2.4, para. 1, Kindle.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Halton, “Allusions to the Stream of Tradition in the Neo-Assyrian Oracles,” *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 46 (2009): 58.

<sup>11</sup> Robert L. Alden, *Job*, The New American Commentary, vol. 11 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 75, Logos Bible Software.



who long for death, but it comes not (3:20)?” Job describes difficulty in life as a “misery” (*‘āmēl*) worse than death. This causes Job to make a direct allusion to the curse of the ground in stating that toilsome work will be required just to eat “bread” (*lè`hèm*, 3:24 cf. Gen 3:19).<sup>12</sup> Alongside the author of Job’s usage of *‘āmēl*, and his direct recall of the curse, it appears that language and imagery from Genesis serves as the backdrop of Job’s suffering. There is mention of light and darkness, day and night (3:4-7), cursing (*’rr*, Job 3:8 cf. Gen. 3:17), and sleep (Job 3:13 cf. Gen 2:21 where *yšn* is also used). Additionally, in Job 3, there is a possible correspondence between six of the days of creation and Job’s suffering. The author documents Job’s lament in such a way that makes it seem like Job is experiencing de-creation.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the author documents Job’s lament in features which allude to Genesis 2-3, and specifically the curse of the ground. Continuing on, the author of Job continues to employ “trouble” (*‘āmēl*) to describe human difficult, but also in pair with “affliction” (*’a`wèn*). Furthermore, through forging lexical connections with Genesis 3:18-19, the author of Job captures the existential anguish of Job.

In Job chapters 4-5, Eliphaz comments on the reason Job is suffering. He argues that individuals who “plow iniquity (*’a`wèn*) and sow trouble (*‘āmēl*) reap the same” (4:8). Therefore, Eliphaz understands Job’s suffering to be earned due to his sin. Later the reader finds out Eliphaz is incorrect in his assessment (Job 42:7), but the author of Job records Eliphaz’s logic in a way that, through irony, shows his error. In Job 5:6-7, Eliphaz wrongly believes that difficulty is not a universal human experience. He declares that affliction (*’a`wèn*) does not come from the dust (*‘āpār`*), nor does man’s toil (*‘āmēl*)

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<sup>12</sup> The LXX translates Job 3:24 as “For groaning comes before my bread,” taking the Hebrew word *pānē(h)*, which means “face,” to mean “in front of” or “before,” designated by the Greek pronoun *pro*.

<sup>13</sup> God creates light and separates from darkness (Gen. 1:3-5), firmament between water and sky (1:6-8), lights in the sky (1:14-19), fish and birds (1:20-23), humans (1:26-31), sabbath rest (2:1-4). Job matches each day with a respective inverse: light turned to darkness (Job 3:4a), light not to shine (3:4b), darkness seizes night (3:6), Leviathan (3:8), perish at birth (3:11), peace of Sheol (3:13) Bob Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 12 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity press, 2002), 144, Logos Bible Software.

sprout (*yismáh`*, root *smh*) from the '*ādāmāh`* (cf. Gen 3:19). Eliphaz follows saying that '*ādām* simply is "born to trouble (*āmēl*)," meaning, when humanity sins it will yield consequence, just as surely as "sparks fly upward" (5:7).<sup>14</sup> In arguing a worldview opposed to the universality and inescapability of the curse of the ground, the author of Job depicts Eliphaz's words in such a way that directly harkens back to it in Genesis 3:19. This is purposeful in order to show that Eliphaz's own words betray his worldview; though rivaling the universality and inescapability of curse of the ground, his own words make a strong case for its unavoidable existence. Eliphaz's worldview is incorrect; human misery is not merely a product of personal sin, rather, it is a product of the curse of the ground.

Through Eliphaz's flawed logic, the author of Job reveals that man's affliction does in fact originate from the dust, not from choices (Job 5:6). It originates from the dust since mankind's return to dust (mortality) is God's chosen method to reinforce certain despair apart from him (Gen 3:19). Humanity was not meant to taste death; man is meant to witness his dominion activity thrive and reach its intended consummation and completion (cf. Gen 1:28). The return to dust is the unnatural unravelling of man's frame and efforts, and its imminence is the interruption of the divine image's meaningful trajectory. Man's trouble does in fact "sprout (*smh*) from the ground (Job 5:7)." This phrase is an allusion to the toilsome work that would characterize Adam's dominion activity after his separation from God's presence and partnership ("thorns and thistles it shall *tasmīha`* [root *smh*] for you," Gen 3:18). Eliphaz is wrong; regardless of what man sows, he will reap frustration due to the inescapability of the curse of the ground.

In summary, the author of Job seems to rely on the curse of the ground episode to depict human suffering. Additionally, he seems to summarize the existential

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<sup>14</sup> John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 75.

experience of suffering humanity with the terms “trouble” (*‘āmēl*) and “affliction” (*‘a`wèn*). Now I will move to Ecclesiastes where “trouble” (*‘āmēl*), along with curse of the ground language, is used to capture the human anguish due to unrealized ontology.

### **Ecclesiastes 3**

The author of Ecclesiastes has been influenced by the author of Job’s usage of Genesis 3:17-19. This is seen in the linguistic forging between the two books.

Additionally, the author of Ecclesiastes reveals that “trouble” or “misery” (*‘āmēl*) is a description that is synonymous to what humankind inherited in the curse of the ground.

Ecclesiastes 3:9 asks, “what gain has the worker from his toil (*‘āmēl*)?” The frustration behind this question is due to the reality that God “has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from beginning to end (Eccl 3:11).”<sup>15</sup> The phrase, God “has made everything beautiful in its time” refers to segments of time that are seen through to their intended end. The second statement contrasts the first by referencing a sense of timelessness that is embedded with man (“eternity into man’s heart”). God embedded this sense of timelessness within man when he created *‘ādām* in his own image and likeness.<sup>16</sup> Yet, the author of Ecclesiastes resents that man’s finitude and mortality forbid him from timelessness (“he cannot find out what God has done from beginning to end”). Thus, Ecclesiastes 3:11 is teaching that humanity gropes for a comprehensive understanding of how all things work towards a completed telos, as it should since this is the original human destiny (Gen 1:28) - yet mortality unnaturally terminates this. Eric Ortlund describes “eternity in man’s heart” as this: “as we move through those differing

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<sup>15</sup> Both 3:10 and 1:13 refer to man’s work as “business,” the former implicitly negative while the latter usage of “business” is explicitly stated to be “evil.” Therefore, with the immediate context being negative, that eternity is in the heart of man is to be understood as a negative idea.

<sup>16</sup> Eric Ortlund, “Laboring in Hopeless Hope: Encouragement for Christians from Ecclesiastes,” *Themelios* 39, no. 2 (2014): 288.

seasons of our lives that God has appointed for us (Eccl 3:1-8), we sometimes get a hint of a far greater order of which individual seasons are only a small part.”<sup>17</sup> If the author of Ecclesiastes is teaching that man has an impulse to partake in something greater than his own limited times so as to contribute to the greater whole, but will not achieve this, and then considers this frustration with the term “toil” (*‘āmēl*) – which elsewhere refers to curse of the ground, then it appears that the author may also understand existential frustration through the lens of the curse of the ground. The certain return to dust runs in tension to the eternity within man’s heart. In the garden, man was destined to work and see-through God’s garden program to completion, but death hides how one’s life contributes to a grander telos. Thus, the question and answer in Ecclesiastes 3:9-10 could be understood as a grappling with the reality of the curse of the ground. Yet, the author of Ecclesiastes continues in 3:16-22 and again relies upon the curse of the ground to understand the human experience.

Given that the curse of the ground is within the immediate context (3:9-11), and since Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 deals with the commonality between man and animal in their origin and conclusion, it is natural to read Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 through a lens of Genesis 2-3. The reader observes the author of Ecclesiastes vex over the mortality of mankind; specifically, how mortality makes man no more advantaged than the beasts. The author starts by stating that mankind’s wickedness reveals that he is beastly (3:16-18). This draws him to make a conclusion concerning both: the children of “man” (*‘ādām*) and beast meet the same fate. The author states in 3:19-20, “They all have the same breath (*rūah*) and *‘ādām* has no advantage over the beasts ... all go to one place. All are from the dust (*‘āpār*), and to dust (*‘āpār*) all return (*šwb*, cf. Gen 3:19).” These two verses are an intensely cynical summary of the damage done to mankind’s privileged position in creation. The creation account shows that man enjoys a special relationship

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<sup>17</sup> Ortlund, “Laboring in Hopeless Hope,” 288.

with God, and that man enjoys a superior status over creation. As for man's special relationship with God, although man and beast are given God's breath (*rûah*) and are taken from the dust ('*āpār*'), man is given special treatment in his formation from dust (Gen 2:5-7).<sup>18</sup> This special relationship that man shares with God allows for the realization of man's divine likeness. Yet, due to sin, mankind loses his special relationship with God after he is cut off from the divine presence and the tree of life (Gen 3:22-24), which results in death (Gen 2:17; 3:19). As for man's superior status over creation - man was meant to exercise dominion over the beasts (Gen 1:28; 2:18), but now man will share the same demise as the beast; death. Since both man and beast die and "return to the dust" (Gen 3:19 cf. Eccl 3:20), the divine image and likeness is frustrated as death invalidates man's superior position over beast. Both are inevitably equals in death.<sup>19</sup>

The author of Ecclesiastes' concluding meditation punctuates this point when he states that upon life's end, "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it" (12:7). The author is conveying that the curse of the ground has triumphed; humanity was originally formed from dust and breathed into him the breath of life (Gen 2:7) but will become dust again and lose the breath of life.<sup>20</sup> Human mortality stunts dominion exercising and punctuates the loss of divine fellowship. Therefore, the author concludes: "vanity of vanities... all is vanity (Eccl 12:8)."<sup>21</sup> The curse of the

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<sup>18</sup> Tremper Longman, III. *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 82-83.

<sup>19</sup> There is a wordplay between the "crafty" (*ārûm*) serpent (Gen 3:1) and the human pair's nakedness (*ērôm*). This wordplay shows that, upon disobedience, man has become just like the serpent; now he is no better or superior than the beasts. This wordplay could be operating behind the author of Ecclesiastes' treatment of the similar fate of man and beast. David Fohrman, *The Beast that Crouches at The Door: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Beyond* (Baltimore: HFBS Press, 2007), chap. 4, "A Phantom Nakedness," para. 2, Kindle.

<sup>20</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 343.

<sup>21</sup> The root word for "vanity" is *hèbèl*, which is the same word for "Abel" in Genesis four. The author of Ecclesiastes could be using this word to allude to Abel, whose life was brief and seemingly a waste. If this connection is intentional, it would strengthen the forged relationship between Genesis and

ground has beset humanity with frailty and mortality, inevitably making life hollow. Moreover, the conclusion of Ecclesiastes confirms what the author teaches in chapter 3: the inability to realize the eternity in his heart, and inescapability of returning to dust, render both the divine image and likeness frustrated.<sup>22</sup>

Thus far, the author of Job chooses “toil” (*‘āmēl*) and “affliction” (*‘a`wèn*) to capture the difficulty of human existence. The author of Ecclesiastes employs “toil” (*‘āmēl*) to explain the frustration of unrealized ontological potential. Each author loads their writing with language and imagery from Genesis 3:17-19 and the associations within its scope. Next, Moses, in Psalm 90, is seen to pair “toil” (*‘āmēl*) and “affliction” (*‘a`wèn*) together as he explains human anguish. This is significant because Moses is providing meditative commentary on his own writings in Genesis 1-3. One gets a clearer understanding of the meaning of Genesis 1-3 by reading Psalm 90. It is also significant because Psalm 90 precedes the writing of Job and Ecclesiastes, thus the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes would have had access to Moses’ writing and been influenced by it. This is proven by each one’s adoption of Moses’ choice words, *‘āmēl* and *‘a`wèn*. Besides this, the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes have used language and imagery that originates in Psalm 90 (and connects to Genesis). So then, it appears Moses has set the paradigm for how to understand the human experience. It is this paradigm that the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes would have noticed and been influenced by, thus interpreting the human experience through the curse of the ground passage in the same way Moses did.

### **Psalm 90**

The pairing of “affliction” (*‘a`wèn*) and “trouble” (*‘āmēl*) is employed by

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Ecclesiastes and provide the interpreter a greater basis for interpreting the content of Ecclesiastes with a Genesis framework.

<sup>22</sup> Strengthening the connection between Ecclesiastes 3 and 12 is that each chapter shares the same conclusion. Each chapter exclaims “vanity” (*hèbèl*, 3:19 and 12:8) after the authors meditation on the return to dust.

Moses in Psalm 90. In it he is meditating on the infinitude of God. He emphasizes God's eternal nature by contrasting it with man's finitude. In doing so, Moses employs language that originates in Genesis 2-3. Because of Genesis' influence upon Psalm 90, the reader should not be surprised to observe that human existence is described in terms that refer to the curse of the ground. First, in Psalm 90:3, man's finitude is characterized by the reference to the curse in Genesis 3:19; "You return man to the dust, and say 'Return (*šwb*), O children of man (*'ādām*).'"<sup>23</sup> The phrase, "return to dust," is the hallmark expression used to capture God's method for reinforcing the despair of life apart from him. Mortality is a disturbance of man's intrinsic longing to contribute to a grander order. In the following verse (90:4), man's finitude is further confirmed by contrast to God's infinitude, where Moses writes that a millennia is like a passing of a day to God.<sup>24</sup> Second, in Psalm 90:10, due to the return to dust (90:3), the duration of man's finite life is dulled by "toil" (*'āmēl*) and "trouble" (*'ā`wèn*, cf. Job 5:6). Since Moses authors both this Psalm and Genesis 3:17-19, and since Psalm 90 describes the mortality of man in language that borrows directly from the curse of the ground event, it is likely that Moses' usage of "toil" (*'āmēl*) and "trouble" (*'ā`wèn*) is his way to summarize the human experience due to the curse of the ground.

The shared language (*'āmēl* and *'ā`wèn*) between Moses and the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes demonstrates that there is a consciousness of the curse of the ground as the explanation for existential anguish. Moreover, the correspondence between Psalm 90 and Ecclesiastes 3 is bolstered when both the authors follow their respective teaching on the "toil" of life (Eccl 3; *'āmēl*, Ps 90; *'āmēl* and *'ā`wèn*) with a desire to find joy within

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<sup>23</sup> "Dust" in Psalm 90:3 is *dākkā*; cf. with Job 4:19 where the author uses a similar word to refer to those "whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed (*y`dākkū*) like the moth." This could demonstrate another instance of the author of Job's reliance on Psalm 90. Will Kynes, "Morality and Mortality: The Dialogical Interpretation of Psalm 90 in the Book of Job," in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 4 (2020): 632.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, The New American Commentary, vol. 13 (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 92, Logos Bible Software.

the limitations and frustration of life. Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 states, “I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil – this is God’s gift to man.” Because of the brevity of life and its inevitable difficulty, the author of Ecclesiastes makes the observation that the wisest response is for man to accept his limitations, enjoy the toil itself, without concern over the outcome.<sup>25</sup> In the same way, Moses writes, “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom” (Ps 90:12), meaning, mankind’s difficulty and finitude should teach him to harvest each day and aspire to a well-lived life.<sup>26</sup> Although these similarities are conceptual, they further reinforce the thought pattern that started with Moses and is adopted by later authors.

Altogether, if the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes had access to Moses’ writing in their lifetime, it is plausible that Moses’ usage of *‘āmēl* and *’ā`wèn* to summarize existential frustration, as well as Moses’ emphasis on human finitude through return to the dust, became the paradigmatic framework in which the later biblical authors understood the human experience.

### **Genesis 3:22-24: Losing Ground**

The expected mortality and existential angst introduced in Genesis 3:17-19 is set into motion in 3:22-24. There, God exiles *’ādām* from the garden of Eden to work the *’adāmāh*. The expulsion from the garden not only initiates the curse of the ground, but it captures the experience of living under it.

The experience of living under the curse of the ground becomes clear when one observes its relation to God’s forewarning of death in 2:17. In 2:17, God threatens Adam with death if he were to disobey: “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely

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<sup>25</sup> Ortlund, “Laboring in Hopeless Hope,” 289.

<sup>26</sup> Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, 92.



die.”<sup>27</sup> But upon disobedience, man is not immediately killed. Instead, the ground is cursed, and he is exiled from the garden. Thus, it appears the expulsion of *'ādām* from the garden is the enactment of God’s forewarned death (2:17). It also seems that the curse of the ground must be included in this experience of death since the curse is consequence of Adam’s disobedience and since it is specifically referenced in the expulsion event. When Moses states, “God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken (*lqh*),” he is showing that the expulsion event is fulfilling the predictions of the curse of the ground: “in pain you shall eat (3:17),” “thorns and thistles is shall bring forth; and you shall eat the plants of the field (3:18),” and “by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken (*lqh*, 3:19).” All these predictions necessarily imply that Adam is evicted from the garden and its bountiful soil. Additionally, Moses later connects exile to death, and since the curse of the ground clearly alludes to exile, it should be included in the experience of death (2:17).<sup>28</sup> So then, Adam’s exile makes certain the curse’s projections of difficult dominion activity and working the same source he was taken from, and will return to.<sup>29</sup> So then, the expulsion from the garden commences the curse of the ground and the

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<sup>27</sup> Disobedience would be the act of asserting Adam’s moral independence from God. This is what God describes in 3:22 when he says, “the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.” God rendered his verdict concerning good and evil at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now, humanity has occupied the position of God as his own judge concerning what is good and what is evil.

<sup>28</sup> L. Michael Morales cites Deuteronomy 30:15 and 19 (“Behold, today I have set before you life and good, and death and evil... life and death blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live”) as proof that Moses understood Israel’s residence in the land or exile from it to be patterned after Adam’s residence in the garden, where there was both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and his exile. L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 54, Logos Bible Software. See also Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 83. He states that the curse of the ground “hint[s] at the drastic changes that will shortly overtake the man.”

<sup>29</sup> But it must be stated: with this expulsion is a hidden mercy. For if God does not expulse man from the garden, then hypothetically, man could live forever in his sinful state; “lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever (3:22).” In both mercy and judgement God sends *'ādām* out from the garden.

Jacques Ellul posits that for Adam and Eve to remain in an immortal state while consumed by autonomy and in disharmony with God is the very essence of hell. Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, trans. Dennis Pardee (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 207.

experience of the curse of the ground is described as the “death” (2:17) of exile.

It is worth zeroing in on the purpose given for the expulsion: God exiles *'ādām* “to work the *'adāmāh* from which he was taken” (3:23). This phrase is striking because it proves that the curse of the ground is intentionally designed to reinforce the reversal of the existential experience in the garden.

First, *'ādām* is given over to the dust. This is the reversal of the state he was in before exile. Before, he is a product of both heaven and earth (Gen 1:26 cf. 2:7). Accordingly, he fellowships with the divine within the context of earth.<sup>30</sup> Further, the narrative of the human pair’s creation begins with a genealogy of “the heavens and the earth (2:4).” This is the first genealogy in the Bible and becomes the pattern for all genealogies that follow. Since “heaven and earth” fill the slot where a name is thereafter inserted, it is reasonable to conclude that the first human pair are to be understood as the product of both the heavens and the earth.<sup>31</sup> This plays out in 2:7, where *'ādām* is formed from the dust of the *'adāmāh* and immediately enjoys unique fellowship with God. Overflowing from the heavenly fellowship, *'ādām* is fashioned from dust yet partakes of heaven, which would mediate heaven’s rule to earth. The sad reality of expulsion from the garden is that man will ever only be the dust: “it is that half of the truth about him by which he has chosen to live; and he must end where he belongs.”<sup>32</sup> The justice of this indictment is in the impression that Adam’s divorce from heaven and imposed exclusivity to the dust is the granting of his wishes. By eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, *'ādām* asserts independence from God. Therefore, his exile from the garden is a

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<sup>30</sup> Peter Gentry writes, “As servant king and son of God mankind will mediate God’s rule to the creation in the context of a covenantal relationship with God on the one hand and the earth on the other.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 201.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 63, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>32</sup> Kidner, *Genesis*, 72.

punishment on Adam’s own terms. This is confirmed by the five-fold usage of “eat” (*’kl*) in 3:17-19.<sup>33</sup> God recognizes the man’s choice to “eat” as an act of defiant self-autonomy; therefore, God renders a punishment that fits the crime. The curse of the ground is the wage of self-assertion, and expulsion is the confirmation of the transaction. The *’ādām* has rebuffed heaven and now will live with its absence. Therefore, God’s decree that *’ādām* be sent out “to work the *’adāmāh*’ from which he was taken (3:23)” is purposed to bring the self-allegiance *’ādām* set into motion, full circle. As *’ādām* looks upon the *’adāmāh*’ he was taken from, and works it with difficulty, he will grapple with the bitter frustration that his folly has earned.

Second, *’ādām* has forfeited all the graces and pleasantries of the garden. Because man is regulated to the terrain outside the garden boundaries, he will no longer enjoy access to the plants and trees which yield fruit (1:11-12), nor the trees that are pleasing to the eye and good for food (1:29, 2:9), which God alone brought into existence for man’s enjoyment. Included in this is the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (2:9). As long as *’ādām* retained access to these blessings, his purpose as kin and king would be endlessly fulfilled – his existence would surge with delight at the level of maximum ontological realization. Dominion activity would be enjoyable and successful. Now, deprived of the garden as the base of operation, without its plentiful supply of food, without the benefit of God’s spoken counsel at the tree of knowledge, without his blessed partnership in dominion activity, and without immortal life, both sonship and kingship have become existential burdens, not blessings. In God purposing *’ādām* “to work the *’adāmāh*’ from which he was taken” is to destine him to inescapable unrealized ontology.

Third, *’ādām* has forfeited the privileged position he has over the beasts. The regulation to “work the ground from which he was taken (3:23)” consequently means that

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<sup>33</sup> Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary of the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 125.

'*ādām*' is no different than the beasts. The man and beast both originate from the '*ādāmāh*', but '*ādām*' was given special treatment. Recall that man's formation is from the "dust of the '*ādāmāh*'" (2:7); but when man is "formed" and "breathed" the "breath of life" into his nostrils by God, God shows his unique regard '*ādām*'.<sup>34</sup> Although animals are living creatures who also have the "breath of life" (7:22), they are not breathed into by God. The animals were formed in a moment (1:24 cf. 2:19), whereas man was gradually and deliberately formed.<sup>35</sup> But to "work the ground from which he taken" (3:23) will conclude in returning to it (3:19). Man and beast will now meet the same fate. In man's reunion with the ground he was taken from, the transcendence of his formation from the ground is relativized. Also recall how God brought the beasts who he had formed from the '*ādāmāh*' into the garden, from the outside field, and man named them (2:19). Even though man and beast have the same origin, they did not occupy the same position in creation nor the same standing with God. God, for the sake of '*ādām*', caused lush vegetation and trees to spring from the '*ādāmāh*' into a garden home (2:8-9) which was separate from the dwelling of the animals (see 2:19 where the animals are designated as "beast of the field," and are brought from their dwelling to Adam). The garden would serve as a place of respite and rejuvenation from the dominion activity for '*ādām*', thus propelling forward the dominion enterprise. Now, man is evicted from the garden home uniquely outfitted for him, to the region where the beast's dwell. He now lodges with the creatures he once exercised dominion over. Man has lost the prestige in creation he once enjoyed.

Since '*ādām*' is regulated outside the domain of the garden to work the '*ādāmāh*', his fate is sealed. Adam will not escape the feeling of heaven's absence, the

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<sup>34</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 195-96. Kidner notes the special attention that only man receives here. Kidner, *Genesis*, 60.

<sup>35</sup> Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 111.

difficulty of dominion, nor the dissolution of his prestigious status over creation. Having forfeited the necessary garden-sources which help to realize the divine image and likeness, humanity will suffer existential anguish - *'ādām* will suffer death. But before it gets better, it will get worse.

### **Conclusion**

Once *'ādām* is exiled to the land outside the garden to work the *'adāmāh*', he begins his trajectory towards death. With death on the inevitable horizon, the human experience will be marked by “toil” and “trouble.” The purpose that mankind longs to fulfill is forever out of reach. The return to dust is the confirmation that man is cut off from sources of life within the garden (God’s presence and the tree of life). The banishment to the land outside the garden means that man has forfeited divine fellowship, enjoyable dominion, and superiority in creation. Thus, *'ādām* is reduced to a life of frustration since his embedded divine image and likeness will remain unrealized.

Later biblical authors adopt the curse of the ground event as the hallmark framework to understand human existential anguish. In Moses’ mediation on the infinitude of God in Psalm 90, he draws a contrast with the finitude of man. Yet, he does this in language and imagery that is reminiscent of the curse of the ground. Moses’ conclusion is that life is “toil” and “trouble.” The authors of Job and Ecclesiastes pick-up on Moses’ usage of these terms and in the same manner use them to depict human suffering.

## CHAPTER 4

### WORSENING HUMANITY

Jean-Jacques Rousseau dared to defy the traditional belief of his day, and penned his novel *Émile*, a story about finding oneself. Rousseau writes, “in the depths of my heart, traced by nature in characters which nothing can efface. I need only consult myself with regard to what I wish to do; what I feel to be good is good, what I feel to be bad is bad.”<sup>1</sup> This self-determination is typical today, where society has graduated from belief in a cosmic plan or god, to belief that every person determines the grand plan and is their own god. Self-determination’s agenda is to “create meaning for a meaningless world.”<sup>2</sup> Rousseau’s seed in the eighteenth-century has blossomed into popular thinking – so much so that even Disney characters embody this self-determination. Elsa in *Frozen* sings, “It’s time to see what I can do, to test the limits and break through. No right, no wrong, no rules for me, I’m free!”<sup>3</sup> This has been the cause of much personal and societal incoherence, division, and pain.<sup>4</sup> Yet, long before Rousseau, there was Adam, and there was his son, Cain. The story of self-determination and its following cursed existence continues with them in Genesis 4.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, ou de l’éducation* (Paris, 1967), 348, quoted in Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017), 224, Kindle.

<sup>2</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, 222.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez, “Let it Go,” available at [www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/indinamenzel/letitgo.html](http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/indinamenzel/letitgo.html).

<sup>4</sup> See Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: Finding God in a Modern World* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 122-132, Kindle.

## Genesis 4: Like Father, Like Son

Thus far Moses has used the ‘*adāmāh*’ as his vehicle to signal the state of ‘*ādām*’. Previously, it has signaled man’s existential bliss in the garden. Then, it signaled a negative movement in man’s existential state. When ‘*ādām*’ acts in defiance, he forfeits God’s presence and the tree of life – both of which are necessary for ‘*ādām*’ to realize his divine image and likeness. With ‘*ādām*’ regulated to the east of the garden (Gen 3:24), and with the first couple having offspring (4:1-2), the next sequence presents the first family in the region of Eden just outside the garden. There they will work the ‘*adāmāh*’ to produce for the animals and themselves the “bush (*śīah*) of the field” and the “small plant (‘*ēsèb*’) of the field (1:30; 2:5).” Recall that the human pair will no longer have the unique vegetation of the garden they once enjoyed;<sup>5</sup> instead, they will consume the vegetation that is outside the garden, which was specifically reserved for the animals alone.<sup>6</sup> This cultivation will be painful and difficult (3:17-19). Further, since ‘*ādām*’ is regulated to the east of the garden, his family now abides in the terrain where the animals dwell. There, he will die and return to the same ‘*adāmāh*’ that he and the animals originated. Humanity’s prominent status within creation is damaged by man’s shared fate with beast – death in the dust.

It is within this situation the story of Cain and Abel unfolds. Although the story of humanity shifts the attention to the sons of Adam, Moses retains the same motif to demonstrate the human experience: ‘*ādām*’ and ‘*adāmāh*’. If the reader maintains awareness of this motif, then they will accurately observe the worsening state of the human existential experience.

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<sup>5</sup> See the usage of “plants yielding seed” [‘*ēsèb*’] and the “tree with seed in its fruit” [‘*ēs*’] in 1:11-12 and 1:29, and “tree with seed in its fruit” [‘*ēs*’] in 2:9. All of these God brought into existence for Adam.

<sup>6</sup> See Genesis 3:24 where the human pair will work the ‘*adāmāh*’ outside the garden, which is what the human pair would have been doing (see Gen 1:30 and 2:5), only with the aid of God and the resources of the garden.

## Cain: Existential Pain Intensifies

Both Cain and Abel fulfill occupations that are precipitated by chapters 2-3. Now that the human family dwells with the animals, Abel functions as a shepherd, thus showing that dominion activity is already evolving (4:2). Yet, Cain inherits the same trade as his father Adam. This creates an expectation for Cain to follow in the footsteps of his father. Moreover, although Cain's farming is situational, the motif of '*ādām*' and '*ādāmāh*' has prepared the reader to witness another adverse alteration to the human experience. Since the motif of '*ādām*' and '*ādāmāh*' has been deployed to trace the arch of the human existential state, from bliss to anguish, it should not surprise the reader to see that both Cain, "a worker ('*bd*, see 2:5, 15) of the '*ādāmāh*,'" and the '*ādāmāh*' itself, become the vehicle for further displaying the anguish of existence. In other words, both Cain and the '*ādāmāh*' forewarn of intensified negative existential movement.

"In the course of time," Cain offers "the fruit of the '*ādāmāh*'" to the Lord as an offering, while Abel offers "the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions" (4:3-4).<sup>7</sup> Cain's offering is rejected. This should not surprise the reader since his offering was from the cursed '*ādāmāh*' and since Abel's was superior in quality.<sup>8</sup> In response, Cain becomes "very angry" and downcast (4:5). Then, in 4:7, the Lord discloses to Cain that he can be reconciled: "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

The Lord's exchange with Cain in 4:7 is notoriously difficult to translate and

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<sup>7</sup> Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary of the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 134.

<sup>8</sup> Hebrews 12 interprets Cain's rejection and Abel's acceptance to be a matter of the faith, which Abel possessed while Cain did not. This coincides with the fact that Abel offered the firstborn and fat portions, while Cain is described to offer only "fruit of the ground" with no mention of its quality, or if it is the first fruits. Further, it is possible that the emphasis on how long it took for Cain to finally offer this sacrifice demonstrates the improper state of his heart.



interpret.<sup>9</sup> I have taken verse 7 to mean that Cain can be accepted, or forgiven,<sup>10</sup> if he properly offers a sacrifice yet again at the door of the garden of Eden,<sup>11</sup> and that Abel will respect him, and in turn as the elder brother, Cain must resume responsibility for Abel.<sup>12</sup> It is this last line of 4:7 that occupies a crucial place in my argument, as it prepares the reader to observe Cain's forthcoming failure as direct defiance of God's gracious offer. Thus, the last line of 4:7 should be understood to say, "his (Abel's) desire is toward you, but you must rule over him." The pronoun typically translated as "its" and "it" in the last line of 4:7 is in the third person-singular, therefore there is warrant to translate this pronoun (*hû*) as "his" and "him." Further strengthening the position that 4:7 refers to the relationship between Cain and Abel is to notice that it is a lexical parallel of Genesis 3:16. If 3:16 refers to the wife's positive relation to her husband ("Your desire shall be

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<sup>9</sup> Victor Hamilton states: "It is fair to say that this is one of the hardest verses in Genesis to translate and to understand." Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 135. Since this verse contains words that have a wide range of semantics, context is the best indication of the proper translation.

<sup>10</sup> Wenham cites Ramaroson who translates *šēl* (Gen 4:7) as "forgiveness," and Calvin and Derek Kidner, who take *šēl* to mean "acceptance." Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1987), 135. Either way, God is offering Cain an opportunity to reconcile the relationship.

<sup>11</sup> L. Michael Morales argues that Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices at the "original sanctuary door, the gate of Eden guarded by the cherubim." He cites the historical frequency of translating "sin is crouching at the door" as "a sin offering lies at the door/entrance." In agreement with this translation is "Adam Clarke (1762–1832), Adoniram Judson (1788–1850), Young's Literal Translation (1862), Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (1877); Matthew Henry (1662–1714) recognized the validity of both translations." L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 57, Logos Bible Software. Matthew Henry translates this line as: "If thou doest not well, sin (that is, the sin-offering), lies at the door, and thou mayest take the benefit of it." Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 17, Logos Bible Software. Robert Alter also includes "sin offering" as a possible alternative translation. Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Henry helps here as he translates "Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it" as "Unto thee shall be his desire, he shall continue his respect to thee as an elder brother, and thou, as the first-born, shalt rule over him as much as ever." Henry comments that God's acceptance of Abel did not transfer the birth right to him; Cain still possesses it, thus Cain has no reason to be downcast. Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 17. John Calvin understands the last line of Genesis 4:7 ("Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it") to refer to the relationship between Cain and Abel. He comments: "Moreover, this form of speech is common amongst the Hebrews, that the desire of the inferior should be towards him whose will he is subject." John Calvin and John King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 204, Logos Bible Software.

contrary,” *tšû qā ’èl*) who will in turn lovingly care for her (“but he shall rule over you,” *mšl*),<sup>13</sup> then it is expected that Moses is using these words in the same way with Cain and Abel. Abel’s desire is for his brother (*tšû qā ’èl*), likely meaning he will respect his brother, and Cain must lovingly care for his brother (*mšl*).<sup>14</sup> With God offering Cain an opportunity for reconciliation with him as well as reinforcing his elder brother duty towards Abel, he is inviting Cain into the beginnings of the human destiny’s restoration. Yet, as is characteristic of Cain, he snubs God’s offer of relationship and representation so he can instead seize a self-made version of it.

Moses records the next segment of the story in such a way that demonstrates that Cain recapitulates the failure of Adam and suffers the same consequence as Adam. The motif of *’ādām* and *’adāmāh* is the vehicle by which Moses indicates this repeated failure and expulsion. There are several touching points between the episode of Adam’s failure and Cain’s failure which is highlighted through the *’ādām-’adāmāh* motif and its near associations. Just as in the garden before, God asks the disobedient individual a question: “Where is Abel your brother” (cf. 3:9, “Where are you?”)?” Cain responds, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper (*šmr*, cf. 2:15)?” There is an ironic wordplay which illuminates the author’s intended point: just as it was man’s responsibility to “keep” or “guard” (*šmr*) the *’adāmāh* of the garden, it is also man’s responsibility to

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<sup>13</sup> Richard M. Davidson argues that *mšl*, which is translated as “rule,” is predominantly used to communicate the idea of servant leadership (2 Sam 23:3; Prov 17:2; Is 40:10; 63:19; Zech 6:13; see Gen 1:16 where *mšl* is used to describe the sun and moon’s governance of the day and night). Elsewhere in the OT, *mšl* is used to describe the servant leadership of rulers and kings (Judg 8:22) as well as the anticipated rule of the Messiah (Judg 8:23; Is 40:10; Mic 4:14; Zech 6:13; 9:10). He makes this argument to prove that the “ruling” (*mšl*) of the husband over the wife in Genesis 3:16 is a positive statement where the husband comforts and cares for his wife. This is in line with the curse/comfort pattern that is observable in God’s exchange with the serpent, the woman, and the man (the serpent is cursed while promised to be defeated, the woman’s birthing is cursed while she is given a comfort in a servant leader husband, the man’s exercising of dominion is cursed while his suffering is mitigated by mortality). If Genesis 4:7 is referring to a sin-offering at the entrance of Eden, and not sin crouching at the door, and if the proper understanding of *mšl* is servant leadership, then it would be strange for God to command Cain to have this kind of rule over sin. Rather, it makes better sense that the “rule” (*mšl*) that Cain is to have in verse seven would relate to Abel. Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2007), 72-73.

<sup>14</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 74-75.

“guard” (*šmr*) his fellow *'ādām*.<sup>15</sup> Previously, the dominion of *'ādām* expanded beyond soil to the beast and to his wife.<sup>16</sup> Now, it seems that the dominion of *'ādām* is expanded to his fellow man. Cain is to rule over his brother, Abel, in loving responsibility. Instead, Cain kills Abel (4:8). This is not only a direct rejection of the brotherly-dominion Cain is charged to keep, but a replacement form of dominion that appeals to Cain’s frustration (4:5). Furthermore, just as Adam defended himself by deflecting responsibility onto the woman (3:12), Cain defends himself by deflecting his responsibility onto Abel (4:9).<sup>17</sup> Similarly, it was Adam’s hand (*yād*) that performed the act which made him guilty (3:22), and it is Cain’s hand (*yād*) that performed the act which makes him guilty (4:11). What is more, just as Adam’s passivity in guarding and keeping the *'adāmāh*, the animals from it, and his wife who comes from the *ādām*, all led to God cursing the *'adāmāh*, so does Cain’s refusal to guard and keep his brother. Finally, just as Adam’s eastward exile contained a hidden grace (3:22-23), so Cain’s eastward exile is accompanied by a provision of God’s protective grace (4:15, see the promise of divine recompense and marking of Cain). The reader should not miss that the episode of Cain’s failure is a recapitulation of his father, Adam’s failure.

Yet, if the reader is analyzing the text with the *'ādām*-*'adāmāh* motif in mind, they see that Moses documents the exchange between God and Cain in a way that reveals that the negative shift in human existence, which Adam initiated, will intensify through Cain. Previously, Adam’s failure to work and keep the *'adāmāh* resulted in his eastward

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<sup>15</sup> Kristin M. Swenson, “Care and Keeping East of Eden: Genesis 4:1-16 in Light of Genesis 2-3,” in *Interpretation* October 60, no. 4 (2006): 381.

<sup>16</sup> See the commonalities that Moses records between Adam’s relation to the animals and his relation to his wife. The animals are taken from the *'adāmāh* and then are brought to Adam and he names them. The woman is taken from the side of *'ādām* and then she is brought to Adam and then he names her. A distinction is made between the dominion over animal and wife: the dominion Adam exercises towards his wife is marked by tenderness, celebration and respect.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Genesis* (Musaicum Books, 2018), chap. 4, sec. 4.4, para. 2, Kindle.

expulsion to the ‘*adāmāh*’ outside of the garden (3:23). Now, Cain’s shedding of Abel’s blood (*dām*) on the ‘*adāmāh*’ (4:11) will result in a greater eastward expulsion from the ‘*adāmāh*’, even beyond the region of Eden.<sup>18</sup> God’s forecast of Cain’s futile farming in 4:12 confirms the loss of residence in Eden: “When you work (*’bd*) the ‘*adāmāh*’ (cf. 2:5, 15; 3:23) it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” So then, the exile that Adam experienced regulated humanity to a damaged relationship with God at the garden gate (see 4:3-4 and 4:7 where offerings are presented at the door, implying some degree of interface). The exile of Cain regulates him to a lifetime of complete alienation from God’s presence. Cain’s response to God in verse 14 confirms that the loss of God’s presence is at play: “Behold you have driven me today away from the ‘*adāmāh*’, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth (4:14).”<sup>19</sup> The curse of Cain is an intensified version of Adam’s expulsion. Adam was “driven away” (*grš*) to the east of the garden to the region of Eden, resigned to a stifled relationship with God. But Cain is “driven” (*grš*, 4:14) from an already diminished interaction with God at the garden gate to the land beyond Eden where there will be no interaction with God (4:16).

Most notably, in Adam’s failure the ‘*adāmāh*’ is cursed (*’rr*, 3:17-19). In the instance of Cain, he is “cursed (*’rr*) from the ‘*adāmāh*’” (4:11). In Adam’s failure, the ‘*adāmāh*’ is cursed; in Cain’s failure, the ‘*adām*’ is cursed by the ‘*adāmāh*’.<sup>20</sup> Cain’s failure moves humanity into greater existential anguish because the first iteration of the curse of the ‘*adāmāh*’ (3:17-24) only damages relationship with God and strains

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<sup>18</sup> See Genesis 2:8, where the garden is indicated to be in the east of Eden, which means exile eastward for Adam would leave him on the other side of Eden that has little territory left. It is a natural inference to think that Cain’s exile would move him beyond the little territory of Eden that remained.

<sup>19</sup> “Away from your face” is an idiom for God’s presence. See where Moses uses this same language in the Aaronic blessing. Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Alter translates 4:11 as “cursed shall you be by the soil,” meaning the ‘*adāmāh*’ is the source of cursedness. The ‘*adāmāh*’ is the means by which man will experience frustrated existence. Alter, *Genesis*, 18.

dominion activity, whereas the second iteration of the curse of the ‘*adāmāh*’ completely alienates humanity from God’s presence into even more unrelenting soil.<sup>21</sup> Now, for Cain and his family, the divine image and likeness will experience an even lesser degree of realization. Cain seems to understand this is what is at stake in verse 14; he grieves the loss of the terrain he was residing upon and the loss of God’s presence.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, sonship and kingship are more than damaged, they are lost. Before, the divine image and likeness could be realized to a degree because the landscape of Eden could still yield some vegetation, and interaction with God could still occur at a distance, through the garden gate. Now, Cain is removed from both the ground outside the garden and the garden gate, ensuring his unrealized ontology.<sup>23</sup> Cain’s failure is emphasized by the ‘*adāmāh*’ and his consequence is defined by the ‘*adāmāh*’.

The episode of Cain’s murder of Abel is a greater dominion failure than Adam’s, and results in an escalated cursing – which is complete exile. The ‘*adāmāh*’ signals this greater failure and cursing. The ‘*adāmāh*’ has set the stage for a despondent human existence which plays out in Cain’s lineage.

### **Two Co-Existing Humanities**

The wandering of Cain concludes when he builds a city called “Enoch” (4:17). In doing so, Cain initiates his own competing line of humanity. In response to losing the sources which brings about the realization of the divine image and likeness, the Cainite

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<sup>21</sup> Wenham comments that the curse from the ground means “you are cursed away from the original home (cf. 2:5) to the uncultivated steppe.” Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 107.

<sup>22</sup> It could also be the case that Moses intends for the reader to observe Cain’s resistance to taking responsibility and repenting since his sulking is phrased as a “fallen face” (4:5-6), yet he vexes the severity and lack of fairness of his punishment indicated by the reason, “from you face I shall be hidden” (4:14).

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Henry writes, “Two things we expect from the earth, and by this curse both are denied to Cain and taken from him: sustenance and settlement.” By this he means Cain’s occupation as a worker of the ground is affected, as well as his ability to reside in the territory he had made home. Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 18. Robert Alter comments that Cain is removed from the ‘*adāmāh*’ that “had hitherto yielded its bounty to him.” Alter, *Genesis*, 18.

seeks to realize them elsewhere. This is pronounced when comparing the dominion activity of Adam and Seth, with Cain and his offspring.

Previously, Adam “gave names” (*qr*’, 2:20; see also 2:19) to the animals. After the curse of the ground is announced, he “named” (*qr*’, 3:20) his wife. This is a significant way his divine image is expressly realized. In the latter example with his wife, Moses records that Adam named his wife “Eve, because she was the mother of all living” (3:20). The meaning of Eve’s name shows that Adam, after disobedience, trusts in God’s promise in 3:15 to provide a seed who will crush the serpent. In the faith-act of naming his wife, Adam is demonstrating repentance leading to reconciled relationship with God – Adam’s dominion activity of “naming” shows he is re-embracing God’s version of the human destiny which he had forfeited.<sup>24</sup> Eve’s activity also evidences this re-embrace. When Eve “names” (*qr*’, 4:25) Seth, she envisions him as a gift of grace, since “Seth” shares common etymology and sound as the word for “granted” (*šāt*).<sup>25</sup> In the same instance, she calls God *’Ēlōhîm*’, which was the name of God used in the dialogue between the serpent and Eve where she doubted God’s goodness. In the gift of another son in place of Abel, Eve references the name of God that she formerly mistrusted, but through her homage to him displays re-commitment.<sup>26</sup> The human pair, by stepping back into right relationship with God, distinguish themselves as an alternate line of humanity, opposite to Cain’s. This distinguished line remains so as it “names” each subsequent son. After Adam “names” (*qr*’) his third son, “Seth” (5:3), Seth “names” (*qr*’) Enosh (4:25). Additionally, “Enosh” can function as both a name and a common noun meaning “man,”

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 68, Logos Bible Software. Further, it can be said that Adam is obeying the expectation that a husband would lovingly care for, or “rule” his wife, as seen in 3:16. Thus, Adam’s naming of his wife is a response of obedient faith to what is spoken in 3:15-16.

<sup>25</sup> K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 290, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>26</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 290.

similar to *'ādām*. It appears “Enosh” confirms that the Sethite line is a new humanity who will recover the originally purposed sonship and kingship.<sup>27</sup>

Further, a closer inspection at the genealogical commentary in 5:1-2 demonstrates that “naming” (*qr'*) signifies the Sethite line is recovering the original human destiny. Moses recalls 1:26-28 in 5:1-2. He writes, “This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and blessed them and named (*qr'*) them *'ādām* when they were created.” Yet, notice that the same action of God, “naming” (*qr'*), is mimicked in the following verse: Adam “names” (*qr'*) his son “Seth” (5:3). The mention of both creation in God’s likeness and God’s blessing recalls the sonship of *'ādām*, and his replication of God’s “naming” recalls the kingship of *'ādām*. Through the continuity of “naming,” it appears the human destiny of intimacy with God and representation of God is passed down from Adam to Seth. The Sethite line is trending towards existential bliss through realized ontology.<sup>28</sup> This reality is punctuated when, after Seth fathers and names Enoch, Moses comments, “at that time people began to call (*'ādām*) upon the name of the Lord” (4:26).<sup>29</sup> There is a new humanity who relates rightly to God and resembles him. Co-existing with this new humanity is the line of Cain.

Conspicuously, the original human destiny is sought by Cain and his descendants, albeit on their own terms. This is observable in their respective instances of “naming.” In 4:17, Cain builds a city and “called (*qr'*) the name (*šēm*) of the city after the name (*šēm*) of his son, Enoch.” Cain’s choice to cease wandering and establish a settlement is his defiant attempt “to reclaim the benefits of God apart from God

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<sup>27</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 290-92.

<sup>28</sup> Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 71.

<sup>29</sup> Morales sees this as a faith-act in divine grace, believing “that God is both willing and able to return his original gift of paradise and who now wait on him in humble submission.” L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 11, Kindle.

himself.”<sup>30</sup> Cain attempts to realize the divine image in his city project since glory and immortality is achieved through an enduring city and name.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, Cain attempts to realize the divine likeness in this city project since it is his counterfeit of the garden of Eden – his self-designed city of god where humanity interacts with the heavenly.<sup>32</sup> His later descendants replicate this same counterfeit city of god.<sup>33</sup> In Genesis 11, humanity builds a city with a tower. The purpose is to “build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make for ourselves a name (*šēm*, 11:4).” Just as Cain built a city for the sake of a “name” (*šēm*, 4:17) – his legacy, so do those who build the tower of Babel. This is another attempt at immortality apart from God.<sup>34</sup> What is more, this is another plan to access the heavenly; this time by breaching the plane of heaven so as to interact with the divine world, tethering heaven and earth together.<sup>35</sup> Cain’s line of humanity seeks to realize its God-given sonship and kingship on its own terms.<sup>36</sup> The juxtaposition is clear; while the Sethite line’s recovery of the original human destiny is

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<sup>30</sup> Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> Morales references the ancient Near East quests of building projects, battle glory, and childbearing, as the typical ways of achieving a perceived immortality. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* records that when Gilgamesh’s desire for immortality was spurned by the gods, he built the city of Uruk. In the *Iliad*, Achilles chooses battle glory instead of rearing children as his form of immortality. Both show the understood methods for achieving immortality, and Cain chooses rearing a son and building a city. Morales, *Exodus Old and New*, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Morales, *Exodus Old and New*, 12. Cain’s city project could also be an attempt to realize the divine likeness in that it is an effort to secure for himself safety and protection from those who would find him and kill him (Gen 4:14). So then, Cain is slighting God’s gracious fatherly protection (recall the protective mark he gives Cain) and seeking out protection and security elsewhere, on his own terms. Morales, *Exodus Old and New*, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Although Genesis 11:1 states that it is the entire human population who is attempting to build this city, at this point in the narrative, the human population is subsumed into Cain’s humanity until God disperses humanity and then restarts the new humanity through Abram. This subsummation occurs in Genesis six, when the sons of God intermarry with the daughters of men. See argument below.

<sup>34</sup> Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 63.

<sup>35</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 1987), 43.

<sup>36</sup> Originally, *’ādām* exercised dominion out of the overflow of fellowship with God (see 1:28 where blessing is first, then commission, or 2:7 and then 2:15, where Adam is formed with care first, then placed in the garden to work and keep it). In the case of Babel, humanity exercises dominion in order to fellowship with God. The humanity that exercises dominion from a place of deficiency, rather than abundance, will realize neither the divine image or likeness.



accomplished through “naming” as an act of obedient faith, Cain’s line seizes the original human destiny through “naming” as an act of self-assertion.

Further, while the Sethite line is recovering the dominion activity that was damaged in Adam’s disobedience, Cain and his line will distort dominion activity. This is highlighted in the contrast between the seventh person in the divergent genealogical lines. Seth’s seventh is Enoch, who walked with God, and was not, for God took him (5:24). Cain’s seventh is Lamech, who introduces polygamy (4:19) and boasts of his excessive violence (4:24). Enoch highlights the godliness of Seth’s line, while Lamech reveals the extent to which mankind has distorted dominion with violence and abuse. The third son of Lamech, Tubal-Cain, demonstrates the regression of humanity in that his name recalls Cain, and his craft of welding weaponry shows that he has corrupted dominion activity with violence.<sup>37</sup> In summary, Cain’s lineage shows that dominion is wickedly innovated towards the end of what benefits itself, rather than what blesses creation.

The irony of the Cainite humanity’s attempt to realize the human destiny on its own terms is that ultimately, the attempts are counterproductive.<sup>38</sup> They do not restore humanity to existential bliss, but rather, they result in futility. Confirming this notion is the final product of Cain’s humanity at the tower of Babel. The “Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of *’ādām* had built” (11:5). The attempt to realize human sonship and kingship falls so short of its goal that God could not inspect it from heaven’s horizon, instead he had to come to earth.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Jabal who is recorded as the first to dwell in tents and breed animals (4:21). Following Jabal is Jubal who discovers music (4:21). Following Jubal is Tubal-Cain who is recorded to construct weaponry and tools (4:22). It is Cain’s family that is credited for innovations of civilization. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 280.

<sup>38</sup> Bernard Och, “Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation,” in *Judaism* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 231-32.

<sup>39</sup> Morales demonstrates the comedic tragedy of humanity’s efforts at the tower of Babel. He comments about the tower of Babel, which is traced to Babylon; “Thus the irony of the name ‘Babylon’ – for the Babylonians it meant the gate of heaven literally ‘the gate of god’ (*bab-ili*), while YHWH and his people it is a pun on the word for ‘confusion.’” Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 62-63. What despairing humanity sees as fulfilling, God sees as counterproductive.

This should not surprise the reader since they have been prepared for the Cainite humanity's futility by Genesis 9. There, after Ham's impropriety with his father, Noah "curses" ('*rr*) Ham's son, Canaan (9:25). The curse of Canaan both recalls the curse of Cain and classifies who will continue the Cainite humanity post-deluge.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, the curse pronouncement captures the vanity of attempting to realize the human destiny apart from God. When Noah pronounces the curse on Canaan, he calls Canaan's lineage "servant" ('*è`bèd*) four times, which evokes the dominion activity of '*ādām* beyond the garden ('*bd*, 3:23; 4:12). It appears Canaan's humanity will perform frustrating dominion activity patterned after Adam and Cain's exile activity. Also, he discloses that Shem (*šēm*), who continues the line of humanity that is recovering the human destiny (see 11:10-26, where Abram comes from Shem's line), will occupy a superior status over Canaan because he is in relationship with God (9:26). This puts the "naming" (*šēm*) at the tower of Babel into the proper light: no "name" (*šēm*, 11:4), regardless of its apparent greatness, will ever make Canaan and his offspring, *šēm*. The humanity of the Cainite line will never realize its ontological potential and its ensuing existential bliss as long as it stubbornly struggles to recover the human destiny on its own terms.

### **The Co-Existence is Compromised**

Still, not even Seth's line will remain righteous; humanity as a whole eventually spirals into wickedness.<sup>41</sup> When the reader arrives at chapter 6, they read, "'*ādām* began to multiply on the face of the '*adāmāh*' and daughters were born to them

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<sup>40</sup> The evidence that Cain's humanity continues through Canaan is established in the continuation of "cursing" ('*rr*).

<sup>41</sup> It seems plausible that Noah's family is excluded from the population of humanity that spirals into wickedness. The genealogy in Genesis 5 locates and traces the direct lineage from Adam to Noah. It does not give attention to all the offspring of each name, just one. This is confirmed in the phrase, "had other sons and daughters," which follows every name listed in the genealogy. It is these various sons and daughters that would comprise those who "began to multiply" in 6:1.

(6:1).” The *’ādām-’adāmāh* motif anticipates negative movement in humanity’s existential state. The negative movement is initiated when “the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose” (6:2). The “sons of God” refer to the godly line of Seth, and the “daughters of man” refers to the sinful line of Cain.<sup>42</sup> That the Sethite line is in mind is confirmed in Moses’ choice words and their recall of Eve’s failure in the garden: “the sons of God saw (*r’h*) that the daughters of man were attractive (*tôb*). And they took (*lqh*) as their wives any they chose” (6:2). In 3:6, Eve saw (*r’h*) that the fruit was good (*tôb*) and she took (*lqh*) it.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Besides the contrast between the line of Seth and Cain mentioned above, the phrase “daughters of man” referring to Cain’s line is strengthened by a similar phrase used in 11:5 (“sons of men”) which refers to the rebellious builders of the tower of Babel. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 183.

<sup>43</sup> Additional support of understanding “the sons of God” as the Sethite line is (1) the dichotomy of two human lineages (Seth and Cain) seem to make sense as the two respective groups - the “sons of God” and the “daughters of man,” (2) the Sethite lineage is bookended by the phrase “fathered a son” (*yld bēn*, 4:25-26, 5:28-29), which could be a possible literary link, whereas Cain’s lineage nowhere contains such language, and (3) Adam’s generation of Seth (5:1-3) carries over language from Genesis 1:26, implying that Adam, and therefore Seth, are God’s sons. Therefore to reference the Sethite line as “sons of God” is textually warranted, and (4) if the line of humanity that relates to God as sons is the Sethite line, and this line is traced from 5:1 through to 6:1, then the intended horizon of the genealogical sequence would concern the status of the Sethite line, thus it seems most natural to interpret the “sons of God” as the Sethite line which was traced just before. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 182-183.

In contest to my interpretation is the interpretation that “sons of God” are angelic beings who leave their position in heaven to commit sexual immorality with the “daughters of men.” Michael S. Heiser has popularized this position in his book. Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015). Peter Gentry defends the angelic position as well, although he does not agree with every conclusion of Heiser. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 149-151. The strengths of this position are, (1) the OT refers to angelic beings/the heavenly counsel as “sons of God,” (2) 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 could be interpreted as alluding to this event in Genesis 6:1-4.

Besides the textual argument I make in the first paragraph of this footnote, which makes sense of the overall narrative of Genesis 1-11 and the genealogies within it, I will respond briefly to each strength of the angelic position. (1) Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7 describes the heavenly court, including Satan, as “sons of God,” and Daniel 3:25 uses the Aramaic equivalent to describe an angel, and Psalm 82:6 uses similar language for the heavenly counsel (see also 1 Kgs 22:19). Yet, against Gentry, this does not require the phrase to be exclusively reserved for heavenly beings (but I do agree with Gentry that the temporal expressions “those days” and “afterwards” in Gen. 6:4 timestamp when this intermingling takes place). In fact, Deuteronomy 32:8 refers to Israel as “sons of God.” Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 326n92. See also Deuteronomy 14:1; Exodus 4:22; Psalm 73:15; Isaiah 1:2; 43:6; Jeremiah 31:20; Hosea 2:1, 11:1-4 for instances where humans are called God’s “sons.” Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 183. Also recall that in the near context, the Sethite line is already cast in terms that portray it as God’s sons (5:1-3). (2) Second Peter 2:4 is likely not describing the judgment that fell upon angels who left heaven to cohabit with women in Genesis 6:2. Gentry argues that 2 Peter 2:4-8 is comprised of two couplets that are joined by a *kai* conjunction between them. He is convinced by the literary structure that the angels who were cast into hell and kept until judgement (2 Pet 2:4) must be grouped with the reference to Noah (2 Pet 2:5), therefore referencing the Genesis 6:1-4 account. Gentry, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 149n4. Yet, Gentry should not be pressed to adopt this literary structure since in 2 Peter 2:4-8, each verse begins with an “if” statement. The first is *ei*, and the rest are *kai* conjunctions, but this does not require the *ei* statement of verse four to be attached to verse 5; it seems permissible for each “if” statement to stand on its own as Peter presents

Thus, the Sethite line is portrayed as echoing the disobedience of their mother, Eve. Consequently, the line is absorbed into the exile-bound and violent line of Cain. The godly line which previously called on the Lord (4:16) now joins the line of humanity which is alienated from God and wickedly innovates the exercise of dominion. In time, all humanity is corrupt: “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (6:5). In 1:31, God observes the created order operating succinctly underneath the dominion of *'ādām*, and Moses records, “behold, it was very good.” In 6:11, God observes the created order, corrupt and filled with violence, and Moses writes, “behold, it was corrupt (6:12).” When *'ādām* suffers estrangement with God, the *'adāmāh* and all upon it suffer too.

### **The Flood: *'Adāmāh* is Renewed**

Due to this pervasive corruption, God intends to judge humanity through de-creation: “I will blot out *'ādām* whom I have created from the face of the *'adāmāh*, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens” (6:7).<sup>44</sup> It is significant that God’s intention to wipe out humanity includes items which harken back to the creation narrative. First, his mention of the *'adāmāh* harkens back to man’s unique creation (2:5). Then, God’s mention of the animals, creeping things, and birds harkens back to the created order that man would exercise dominion over (1:26-28).<sup>45</sup> Together, these

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historical events in sequential order so as to warn and encourage the saints. Additionally, Jude 6 mentions the angels who “left their proper dwelling,” and undergo the same consequence as the angels in 2 Peter 2:4. Then, Jude 7 states, “just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality.” This seems to say that both Sodom and Gomorrah’s sin and the angel’s choice to leave their proper dwelling are sexual in their nature. Gentry, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, n3. Yet, “likewise,” or literally, “in the same manner these” (*ho homoios tropos houtos*), may not convey an exact parallel between the nature of the angel’s sin and Sodom and Gomorrah’s, but rather the two share a broader similarity of departing from what was “proper” and “natural,” resulting in judgment. Jude 6-7 is certainly a complex passage to interpret, yet I think it is wisest to interpret under the broader parallel option rather than the exact parallel option since there is not sufficient biblical data to require us to see the angel’s abdication of their position as a sexual sin.

<sup>44</sup> See also 7:23 where Moses narrates that God fulfills his intention of de-creating the created order that existed upon the *'adāmāh*.

<sup>45</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 344-45.

allusions to the creation account show that God is intending to undo the world he has made. Genesis 6:13 further expounds on the relationship between creation's undoing and humanity's violence: "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them." Similar to Cain's indictment arising from Abel's blood crying out from the ground (4:10), the earth itself testifies to the pervasive evil of man as it absorbs the body and blood of humanity.<sup>46</sup> So then, the ground that was supposed to be subdued by humanity, now testifies to its violence. The ground that once exalted humanity, now judges it. Hence, for a new humanity in place of the corrupted humanity, a de-creation and re-creation must occur, thereby both a renewed '*adāmāh*' and a new '*ādām*' may emerge from the waters, renewed.

Upon the conclusion of the God's purging of the ground and his judgment against humanity, God vows to "never again curse the '*adāmāh*' because of '*ādām*', for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth" (8:21). This statement confirms that the deluge is a form of cursing of the '*adāmāh*', and that it is in response to '*ādām*'. Thus, the '*ādām*'-'*adāmāh*' motif sounds its dark note again: when '*ādām*' fails to exercise dominion properly, the '*adāmāh*' will suffer – which in turn indicts '*ādām*' (3:17-19, 4:11, 8:21). However, this instance discloses God's grace as well since he pledges to never again flood the earth in judgment. Therefore, humanity is assured that despite its corrupted nature (8:21; "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth"), God will not further punish humanity by cursing the ground in the form of deluge and de-creation.<sup>47</sup> Although the supplemental curse of the '*adāmāh*' is removed, the curse of

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<sup>46</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 107.

<sup>47</sup> The "curse" in 8:21 is the root *ysp qll*, whereas in 3:19 it is '*rr*'. Lexically, they are not the same word, so the curse in 8:21 is not the same curse in 3:19; it is in addition to it. Wenham argues that God's vow to "never again curse the ground" (8:21) is better translated and understood as a vow to "not curse the ground any further." He comments: "This shows that God is not lifting the curse on the ground pronounced in 3:17 for man's disobedience but promising not to add to it" Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 190. He argues this translation on the basis that the position of "again" ('*ôd*') in this sentence is after "curse." Matthew Henry also agrees this sentence refers to adding to the original curse of 3:17-19. Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 28.

3:17-19 remains – unless there is an *'ādām* who will reverse this curse.

### **Noah: *'Ādām* Needs Renewed**

Within the backdrop of the deluge judgment, Noah's family is persevered, and thus is the hope for humanity. As the reader progresses through chapters 6-9, they will notice that Noah is presented as a second Adam. This includes Adam's commission as king and son (the divine image and likeness), as well as his failure in kingship and sonship.

The transition of Adam's mantle to Noah begins in 5:29 where Lamech, Noah's father, pronounces that Noah will bring relief from the curse: "Out of the *'adāmāh*' that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands." Noah is designated to reverse the curse that Adam has earned. Add to this, Noah is quickly mentioned to father three sons, just like Adam (6:9 cf. 5:32). With these connections in mind, the reader is set to see Noah take on the role of Adam in the proceeding narrative. First, Noah finds favor in the eyes of the Lord (6:8). Here, amidst a generation where humanity has fallen out of kinship with God, is an *'ādām* who is in right relationship with God. Next, God tells Noah that "I will establish my covenant with you" (*hēqîm berît*, 6:18), which refers to upholding a previous covenant. Although the creation account lacks the word "covenant," this phrase demonstrates that there is an understood covenant between Adam and God that Noah has inherited.<sup>48</sup> Then, in 6:20, the list of animals Noah is told to bring into the ark parallels the list of animals under Adam's care in 1:26-28. In this same list, Noah is told that these animals "will come in (*bw* ' ) to you to keep them alive." Similarly, in 2:19, God "brings" (*bw* ' ) the animals to Adam for him to name. The significance of this repeated action is

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Additionally, if not for this pledge, it seems the *'adāmāh*' would require continual purging as humanity continually polluted it with violence.

<sup>48</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 155.

that Adam’s sonship was displayed in God’s partnership which aided him in exercising kingship dominion (2:19). So then with Noah, the prospect of realizing the potential of the divine image and likeness is awakened. Additionally, there are parallels between Genesis 1-2 and Genesis 8-9 that present the flood’s conclusion as the emergence of a new creation. Just as God’s “spirit” (*rûah*) hovered over the water (1:2), so God sends a “wind” (*rûah*) over the flood waters to renew the earth (8:1-2). Just as God divided the water to create an expanse between sky and waters (1:6-7), so God restrains the waters from the deep and the sky to restore the divide (8:2). Just as God separated the ground from the waters (1:9), so his restraint of the flood waters causes ground to emerge again (8:3-5). Just as the sky was filled with birds of the air (1:20-23), so the post-diluvian sky houses birds (8:6-12). Just as creatures of the land and the sky are generated from the earth to populate the earth (1:24-25), so they are called from the ark into the new creation (8:17-19). Just as God enlists the human pair to procreate and exercise dominion over the created order (1:26-28), so Noah, his wife, and his family are established as the head of the created order, then blessed with the same commission that Adam and Eve were given (8:17-19; 9:1-2).<sup>49</sup> Most significantly, at the conclusion of judgement, the ‘*adāmāh*’ is cleansed and dry, seemingly ready for a new humanity to emerge from it (8:13). The dawn of a new creation anticipates the relief from the curse predicted in 5:29. Yet, even though the ‘*adāmāh*’ is renewed, it is apparent that a greater renewal must occur; not in the ‘*adāmāh*’, but in the ‘*ādām*’.

Even though the state of the ‘*adāmāh*’ has changed, the commission God gives to Noah in 9:1-7 proves that the state of ‘*ādām*’ has not. Noah inherits Adam’s commission from 1:28, yet with differences. Animals now fear and dread humans (9:2), whereas before humanity and animals cohabitated in peace. Regarding food for consumption, beforehand Adam was given “every plant yielding seed” and “every tree

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<sup>49</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 162-163.

with seed in its fruit” (1:29). Now, those plants are unavailable, and Noah is told he may eat the “green plant” (9:3). These are the plants that were reserved for animals alone according to 1:30. The vegetation with seed appears to be an item available only in the garden, and now outside the garden Noah must eat what was originally intended for the animals only. Furthermore, before the animals were subdued and cared for, but now they are available to Noah to kill and consume (9:3), although with concessions concerning the lifeblood (9:4). Finally, God emphasizes the prohibition of murder (9:5-6), which was never a feature of life in the garden but has become all too common since. These differences show that the abuse of dominion will not end - *'ādām* has not changed. These concessions are introduced to curb violence and restrain humanity from drifting back into to the pre-deluge corruption.

In sum, it seems that the possibility of operating according to sonship and kingship has been restored to humanity, but only to a degree due to the corrupted state of both humanity and its dominion activity. Consequently, humanity will persist in a state of existential anguish due to the inability to fully realize its ontological potential. The vocation Noah chooses prepares the reader to witness this certainty: “Noah began to be a man of the *'adāmāh*’, and he planted a vineyard” (9:20). The irony is purposeful: the new *'ādām*, Noah, returns to the activity of the former *'ādām*. Predictably, he repeats the failure of Adam: he mismanages the garden and sins, resulting in shameful nakedness (9:21-22).<sup>50</sup> The *'adāmāh*’ once again confirms the failure of *'ādām*. The figure who is supposed to bring existential relief is the figure who confirms that *'ādām* will continue in existential anguish. Humanity awaits a new *'ādām* who will bring relief from the *'adāmāh*’ instead of cursing.

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<sup>50</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 170.



## Conclusion

Moses utilizes the '*adāmāh*' to characterize the state of '*ādām*'. The motif follows Adam's family to the outskirts (3:23-24). There, the '*adāmāh*' shows that Cain repeats the dominion exercising failure of Adam. When Cain murders his brother, Abel (4:8), he fails to exercise dominion over his fellow '*ādām*', and in turn the polluted '*adāmāh*' indicts him (4:10). The '*adāmāh*' becomes the vehicle of Cain's cursing (4:11), and he is totally alienated from God to the unrelenting '*adāmāh*' beyond Eden (4:12). Without God's presence and without ease of dominion activity, the divine image and likeness cannot be realized. Cain's lineage is destined to existential anguish due to unrealized ontological potential. But Cain responds to this curse by broadening dominion through innovation and culture, which ultimately results in violence and abuse (4:17-22). Parallel to Cain's lineage is the Sethite family. Whereas Cain's family doubles down and seeks ontological realization on their own terms, the Sethite genealogy seeks to recover ontological realization on God's terms (4:25-26; 5:1-3, 28-29). However, even the Sethite humanity is compromised (6:1-2) and all humanity becomes corrupted by failure to exercise dominion (6:5, 11). The '*adāmāh*' is polluted with death, and God responds in de-creation, both to cleanse the '*adāmāh*' and to restart a new '*ādām*'. Noah champions a new humanity that inherits the prospect of realizing the divine image and likeness. Yet, the curse of 3:17-19 still remains, and Noah, the new Adam, repeats Adam's failure. Noah will not relieve the curse of the '*adāmāh*' as he was predicted to (5:29). Instead, he demonstrates that a different '*ādām*' is required still.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESURRECTED HUMANITY

The prospect of death infects the human experience with fear. Ernest Becker says, “it is a mainspring of human activity – activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man.”<sup>1</sup> What Becker means is that humanity preoccupies itself to avoid feeling the twinge that accompanies the inescapability of death. Film director Woody Allen was once asked if he hoped his life would continue on through his work. He replied, “I’d rather live on in my apartment. I don’t want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it by not dying.”<sup>2</sup> Yet, what if death was not the final destiny? What if there was more beyond it? Cultures throughout time have held to something like this. Mankind has often celebrated death, believing it “is the ultimate promotion, the final ritual elevation to a higher form of life.”<sup>3</sup> The belief in the afterlife is historically attested, but what is not clear is on what basis mankind has formulated these hopes. The OT authors develop a belief in the afterlife. The distinguishing feature of the OT vision for life after death is its cogent agreement concerning how life after death will occur. If the OT authors’ presentation of hope for life after death is compelling, then the prospect of death is not one of fear, but of joy.

#### **Genesis 5:29: Hoping for Relief**

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973). 20.

<sup>2</sup> Yuval Harari cites this famous statement. See Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017), 28.

<sup>3</sup> Becker, *The Denial of Death*, 21.

Lamech, the ninth name in the Sethite lineage (Gen 5:26), lives on a topography that is cursed, thus difficult to till (3:17-19). He also lives amongst a humanity that is corrupted to the extent that God is “regrettable” and “grieved” over his creation (6:5-6). Due to difficult work and corrupted humanity, Lamech is witnessing the existential anguish of unrealized ontological potential; the potential of the divine image and likeness remains unfulfilled. It is within this context that he names his son, Noah (*nōah*), which sounds like the word for “rest.” Lamech gives his explanation in 5:29; “Out of the ‘*adāmāh*’ that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief (*nhm*) from the work and from the painful toil of our hands.” Lamech’s exclamation looks backward and forward; it looks back at the curse of the ‘*adāmāh*’ (3:17-19) in anticipation of its “relief” (*nhm*), and it looks forward to a time when God no longer “regrets” (stem *nhm*) that he had made ‘*ādām*’ (6:6).<sup>4</sup> Together, Lamech’s cry reveals the need for a restored humanity, one unshackled from futile dominion activity and one in reconciled relationship with God. Therefore, the ‘*adāmāh*’ and ‘*ādām*’ require the curse of the ground to be lifted. Noah, Lamech’s son, is chosen to champion this endeavor (6:8).

Although Noah is chosen to triumph the ‘*adāmāh*’ and bring about a new humanity, he fails to exercise dominion over the ‘*adāmāh*’. Rather, it dominates him (Gen 9:20). Evidently Noah is not the ‘*ādām*’ who will lift the curse of the ‘*adāmāh*’ and relieve humanity. The ‘*ādām*’ who was supposed to bring relief from the ‘*adāmāh*’ and rest to humanity (5:29) is the figure who confirms that humanity must wait. Yet, there remains hope. Later OT authors develop an answer to Lamech’s unfulfilled wishes; they perceive that relief from the curse of the ‘*adāmāh*’ is possible through a different ‘*ādām*’ - one who will triumph over the curse of the ‘*adāmāh*’ rather than succumbing to it.

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<sup>4</sup> K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 317, Logos Bible Software. God’s following pronouncement seems to indicate that the necessary solution to bring about this relief from the ground is renewal of both ‘*adāmāh*’ and ‘*ādām*’: “I will blot out ‘*ādām*’ whom I have created from the face of the ‘*adāmāh*’” (6:7).

Lamech's wish for a champion who will initiate a new humanity unfettered from the curse is shared by later OT authors. What they suggest is that very source that shackles 'ādām with existential anguish will be the source which unleashes him to existential bliss. In short, the curse of the 'ādāmāh' concludes upon resurrection from it, and a new 'ādām will lead the way.

### **Arising from Dust: Resurrection Life & Liberation**

There are five portions of OT text which indicate bodily resurrection from the *ādāmāh*. As I exegete each respective text, I will show that these texts share multiple lexical connections. It is also apparent that these authors depend on Genesis 3:19 and its surrounding context as the background for their writing. Additionally, it will be evident that these authors depend on one primary text (Job 19:25-26) and share an interdependency with one another.

#### **Job 19:25-26**

Job 19:25-26 is the earliest text which suggests the ground as the portal of resurrection, which in turn overturns human anguish. Job 19:25-26 details Job's anticipation that God will "stand" (*qwm*) on the "dust" ('*āpār*) and vindicate Job in a bodily state.<sup>5</sup> Leading up to 19:25-26, Job describes the abandonment he feels during his period of suffering. In this grievance he states his desire for his words to be written down so that at a later point he may be vindicated (19:23-24). Then, Job asserts his confidence in future vindication: "For I know that my Redeemer lives (*hāy*), and at the last he will stand (*qwm*) upon the earth ('*āpār*)" (19:25). The reason Job is confident in future vindication, and thus desires his words recorded, is because he believes that God will stand embodied and give witness to his plight. But there is more; Job anticipates this

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<sup>5</sup> Robert L. Alden, *Job*, The New American Commentary, vol. 11 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 207-208, Logos Bible Software.

vindication to occur while he too is embodied, but after decomposition. He states, “And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God” (19:26). The next verse confirms that Job means a physical interaction, post-mortem: “whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another...” (19:27).<sup>6</sup> Due to the mention of “flesh” and the four-fold reference to eyes in verses 26-27, it is clear Job anticipates a meeting with God in bodily state.<sup>7</sup> John Hartley interprets these verses to anticipate an immediate vindication at the conclusion of Job’s suffering,<sup>8</sup> but this does not corroborate with the details of the text, nor does it corroborate with the connections to Genesis which are already operating in the background of Job.

One could argue that God’s standing on the “dust” (‘*āpār*, Job 19:25) refers to immediate vindication taking place upon the ash heap Job is sitting in (Job 2:8). But “ashes” is ‘*ēpèr*, not ‘*āpār*. Also, this interpretation does not consider that ‘*āpār* connotes the ground which collects decomposition (see Job 34:15). Moreover, it has previously been argued that the author of Job is heavily influenced by Genesis 3:17-19, so the curse of the ground (Gen 3:19) has infused the ‘*āpār* with associations of mortality and frustration.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, if it is exegetically discernable that 19:25-26 anticipates a physical meeting with God, post-mortem, then Job’s assertion means nothing less than God will stand on the surface that confirms the mortality of man, and he will join God there. The place which defines human anguish due to unrealized ontological potential will become the meeting place of God and man. Further, the language Job uses to describe his

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Henry comments: “Job speaks of seeing him with eyes of flesh... the same body that died shall rise again, a true body, but a glorified body.” Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 695, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>7</sup> Alden, *Job*, 207-208.

<sup>8</sup> John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 154.

<sup>9</sup> See argument in chap. 3.

hope of resurrection becomes paradigmatic for later biblical authors.

### **Psalm 104:29-30**

The idea that God will overturn the state of humanity through resurrection is developed in Psalm 104:29-30. The Psalter writes in verse 29 that God takes “away their (living creatures’) breath (*rûah*, cf. Gen 1:2),”<sup>10</sup> and they “return to their dust (*‘āpār*, cf. Gen 3:19).” This last phrase refers to the mortality of man which originates in Genesis 3:19 with the curse of the ground. Yet, just as God has the power to take away the breath of life, he also has the power to apply it. The following verse (Ps 104:30) states God “sends forth (his) ‘spirit’ (or ‘breath,’ *rûah*)” and “creates” (*br`*, cf. Gen 1:1, 27), and brings about renewal from “the face of the *‘adāmāh`*.” The idea in these verses is that God has the power to both conclude and originate life.<sup>11</sup> Yet more could be said: due to the touching points between these verses and Genesis 1-3, it is hard to miss the expectation of recreation taking place upon the same surface man was originally formed from (Gen 2:7) and which, in judgement, was pronounced to return to (Gen 3:19). Strengthening this insight is the similarity between the renewal of the face of the *‘adāmāh`* in Psalm 104:30 and the renewal of the face of the *‘adāmāh`* in the deluge in Genesis.<sup>12</sup> Just as the ground required purging so that a new creation could arise from it, so in Psalm 104:30, new creation is connected to renewal of the ground.<sup>13</sup> If this is right,

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<sup>10</sup> Conceptually is similar to God’s creative act of breathing life into man in Genesis 2:7, which includes the animals as seen in 6:17 and 7:15

<sup>11</sup> John Calvin and James Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software), 168, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>12</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, *Psalms*, The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 2 (London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 399, Logos Bible Software. Additionally, others affirm the possibility that these verses allude to life beyond death: “With this lovely poetic play, the psalm bears witness to the promise of ongoing life, perhaps even to the rare idea in the Old Testament that there is the promise of life, breath, and spirit beyond the grave.” Nancy L. DeClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2014), 460.

<sup>13</sup> See argument in chap. 4 concerning God’s intention in the deluge judgment in Genesis 6-8.

then the Psalter is further clarifying the idea presented by the author of Job. The picture that is progressively coming into focus is that God will bring about renewal from the same source (*‘āpār*, *‘adāmāh*) that is rhetorically used to capture the idea of man’s existential anguish. The curse of the ground is reversed by resurrecting from it, and although it has resigned man to existential frustration, it will release him to existential bliss. This is made explicitly clear in Daniel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

### **Daniel 12:2**

Daniel 12:2 alludes to the same event that Job 19:25 and Psalm 104:29-30 refer to. Daniel is told that “many” (*rāb*) who are asleep in the “dust” (*‘āpār*) of the earth (*‘adāmāh*)” will “awake” (*qys*) to either everlasting “life” (*hāy*) or shame (12:2).<sup>14</sup> Resurrection from the dead is promised, and the source which captures the existential anguish of man is the means. The significance of this promise begins in the linguistic connection it shares with Genesis 3:19. The “dust” (*‘āpār*) is the origin of man (Gen 2:7) and was never meant to be his final destination (Gen 3:19). The dust is used to capture the reality of humanity’s interrupted telos and separation from the transcendent.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the “ground” (*‘adāmāh*) typified the existential bliss of man, as it showcased the divine image and likeness through kingship and kinship. Upon disobedience, the *‘adāmāh* is used to capture the failure and frustration of humanity as its purposed kinship and kingship are unable to be realized to the fullest potential. But Daniel’s prophetic testimony projects a time that neither the *‘āpār* nor the *‘adāmāh* limit

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<sup>14</sup> The term “sleep” alludes to the temporary nature of death (see Jer. 51:39, 57; Job 3:13; 14:12; Ps 88:5; 1 Kgs 2:10; 11:21, 43). Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 362.

Additionally, “many” (Dan 12:2) does not mean a limited number of people, but all people. Daniel is predicting the resurrection of all humanity that has ever existed. See Isaiah 2:2-3 where Isaiah makes “all” and “many” synonymous terms. The “many” are delineated into two groups: those raised to everlasting life, and those raised to everlasting shame (Dan 12:2). Paul R. House and Tremper Longman III, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary Series (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 95.

<sup>15</sup> See argument in chap. 3.

humanity from its ontological potential. Instead, both will become the gateway for humanity to emerge into its destined purpose. This re-emergence is described as awaking from the “dust” (*‘āpār*) of the “earth” (*‘adāmāh*) to everlasting “life” (*hày*, Dan 12:2).

Altogether, the usage of *‘āpār* and *hày* reveals a dependence upon Job 19:25. There, Job’s Redeemer “lives” (*hày*) and will one day stand on the “dust” (*‘āpār*).<sup>16</sup> In Job 19:26, Job expects his God to meet him face to face upon the same *‘āpār* which defines man’s mortality. When the reader comes to Daniel 12:2, it seems that the angel speaking with Daniel expresses a message that resonates with Job 19:25-26. Since Daniel 12:2 predicts that the *‘āpār* will be how man will rise, the meeting upon the “dust” that Job discusses could very well be the same event Daniel has in mind. Additionally, both the angel in Daniel and the author of Job share a connection concerning the kind of “life” which awaits the resurrected. Job exclaims that his Redeemer “lives” (*hày*), and the angel in Daniel predicts the righteous to resurrect to eternal “life” (*hày*). With the correlation developed by each author’s usage of *‘āpār*, it seems natural to assume that their joint usage of *hày* suggests that the “life” which God possesses (Job 19:25), which Job expected to spectate (Job 19:26), will be enjoyed by the “many” who awake to “life” (*hày*, Dan 12:2).<sup>17</sup> Said differently, God’s very life will be shared with those resurrected to everlasting life. Daniel’s prophecy confirms the suspicions of the author of Job: the overturning of the curse of the *‘adāmāh* (Gen 3:19) and its affiliated existential anguish will transpire through resurrection.

Moreover, Daniel’s recorded prophecy may intentionally echo Moses in

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<sup>16</sup> Daniel 12:13 solidifies further the idea that Job 19:25 and the angel in Daniel 12 are speaking of the same “rising from the dust” event. In Daniel 12:13, a different angel comforts Daniel by telling him that he shall “rest” and then shall “stand” at the “end of days.” This conceptually agrees with the prediction in Daniel 12:2, that those who “sleep” shall “awake.”

<sup>17</sup> Further confirmation that the resurrected awake from sleep to life is evidenced in Daniel 12:13, where Daniel is told he will “rest” until he “stands” in his “allotted place at the end of days.” Although the words are not the same as 12:2, the concept carries through. Daniel is given personal assurance that he is included in the many who rise to everlasting life.



Genesis 2:7. There, Moses writes that man was formed from the “dust (*‘āpār*) of the ground (*‘adāmāh*)” and was breathed into with the breath of “life” (*hāy*). The angel in Daniel foretells of a humanity who will awake from the “dust (*‘āpār*) of the ground (*‘adāmāh*)” to everlasting “life” (*hāy*, Dan 12:2). It seems that Daniel casts the resurrection of humanity in terms reminiscent of God’s creation of humanity. This means that resurrection will be an act of re-creation, patterned after the first creation in Genesis 2:7.<sup>18</sup> It is conceivable then, that the life God generates in creating *‘adām* in Genesis 2:7 is the same life he possesses in Job 19:25, and is the same life he will share with the resurrected humanity in Daniel 12:2. Altogether, it is plausible to conclude that the angel in Daniel 12:2 anticipates a new creation event, patterned after the first, where a new humanity will take form. Yet, the angel speaks not only of a new humanity, but of a restored destiny.

Daniel 12:3 confirms that resurrection will restore the human destiny. Verse 3 states that the “wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”<sup>19</sup> The simile that believers are like the brightness of the sky and like the stars is meant to convey reinstatement to kingship. This is attested in Balaam’s oracle in Numbers 24:17 where he predicts a “star shall come out of Jacob,” clearly referring to a messianic king figure. Also notable is the celestial language used to describe kings David and Solomon when they are called “an angel of God” (1 Sam 29:9; 2 Sam 14:17, 20). Beyond this is intertestamental writing which depicts in similar language the future hope of resurrection for believers. The *Testimony of*

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<sup>18</sup> Additionally, this assertion finds support from Psalm 104:29-30, where resurrection looks like recreation. There, living beings “return to their dust (*‘āpār*)” until God’s “breath” (*rūah*, Gen 1:1) “creates” (*br*) and renews the “face of the *adāmāh*.”

<sup>19</sup> That the angel is speaking about resurrected believers as the “wise” and “those who turn many to righteousness” is confirmed later in verse 10 when a different angel tells Daniel that these words are for those who “purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined” as well as for the “wise.” The second angel uses the same word for “wise” (*śkl*) as the first angel does in verse 3, and conceptually describes the believer in such a way that links them with “those who turn many to righteousness” in verse 2.

*Moses* 10:9 anticipates Moses to be raised “to the heights; yes, he will fix you firmly in the heaven of the stars.” *2 Baruch* 51:10 similarly states that believers will “live in the heights... like angels and be equal to the stars.” *1 Qumran* 4:8 adds that God’s faithful remnant will receive “a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light,” and *1 Enoch* 108:12-14 states “I shall bring them out into the bright light, those who have loved my holy name... and they shall be resplendent for ages that cannot be numbered.”<sup>20</sup>

The combination of astitial language with royal language seems to support the conclusion that the angel in Daniel is speaking of humanity graduating from death into royalty through resurrection. This coincides nicely with the vision for humanity that Genesis presents. Since humanity is in the image of God (Gen 1:26), they are to represent God as kings on earth, exercising royal rule over creation (Gen 1:28). The divine image embedded in each human is frustrated since both the enabling partnership with God and immortality has been lost, but through resurrection the divine image will be fully realized again. Further, already in the book of Daniel the reader observes that the “saints of the Most High” will receive global dominion, which implies kingship (7:18, 22, 27). Thus, the best understanding of righteous and wise persons as stars is that it refers to royal authority over the world, just like the lights in the sky govern the world in Genesis 1.<sup>21</sup>

Given the linguistic connections already established between Genesis 3:19, Job 19:25 and Daniel 12:2, it appears that Daniel records what he is told in such a way that indicates an awareness of existential anguish overturning through resurrection in order for the divine image to reach full realization through kingship.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 3 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2003), 112, Kindle.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 113.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 18 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 316, Logos Bible Software.

## Isaiah 26:19

Another text that depends on Job 19:25 is Isaiah 26:19. Isaiah 26:19 anticipates the dead to “live” (*hyh*), “rise” (*qwm*) and “awake” (*qys*) from the “dust” (*‘āpār*).<sup>23</sup> The same root word (*qwm*, “stand”) that is used to describe the standing God will do upon the *‘āpār* in Job 19:25 is employed in Isaiah 26:19 to describe the upward rising from the *‘āpār* of those who are asleep. This suggests that the activity of God upon the *‘āpār* (“stand,” *qwm*) will be matched by those who “rise” (*qwm*) from the dead (Is 26:19). These lexical connections confirm Job’s anticipation of face-to-face vindication. Job’s certainty of joining God upon the dust he returned to is confirmed by Isaiah when he attributes God’s “standing” (*qwm*) upon the *‘āpār* from Job 19:25 to those who awake and rise (*qwm*) from the *‘āpār* in Isaiah 26:19.

If there is any doubt that Isaiah is referring to resurrection, the resurrection message of Daniel 12:2 proves to be its counterpart. In Daniel 12:2, righteous humanity will sleep in the *‘āpār* and “awake” (*qys*) to life – the very same activity that is described in Isaiah 26:19: “You who dwell in the dust [*‘āpār*], awake [*qys*] and sing for joy!”. The relationship between Daniel and Isaiah is intertextual, yet it is also inter-conceptual.<sup>24</sup> Although the word that Daniel and the author of Job use for “live” is different than Isaiah’s (the author of Job uses *hāy* and Isaiah uses *hyh*), the concept carries over into Isaiah; the life which God possesses will be shared with resurrected individuals. So then, if humanity “rises” (*qwm*) with God to meet on the *‘āpār* and “awakens” (*qys*) from it to resurrection life, then this is the reversal of the curse in Genesis 3:19. There, humanity is resigned to the demise of the dust, along with its ontological frustration. But now,

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<sup>23</sup> Gary Smith argues that this verse is only claiming that God has the power to restore life, and “there is no indication when this will happen, how this will happen, or who will rise... these are not promises of national restoration but a commitment to bring someone who was considered dead back to life.” Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15A (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 453, Logos Bible Software. This assertion misses the deep intertextual relationship Isaiah has with other biblical authors. When exposed, it is clear that Isaiah has in mind more than either national restoration or mere metaphor.

<sup>24</sup> Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 117.

humanity overcomes the dust by standing with God himself above it.

Isaiah 26:19 continues and says, “For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.” This verse confirms that Isaiah has in mind bodily resurrection. The imagery of dew which is of light (Is 29:19) refers to the idea of a seed which has died and is sown in the earth, and which spring to life when dew from heaven softens it.<sup>25</sup> The parallel line, “the earth will give birth to the dead,” then expounds on the previous line: just like a seed in the dirt, human bodies which have died in the dust of the earth will spring to life from the dust of the earth. This idea is same as that in Psalm 104:29-30, where those who return to the dust are recreated from it.

So then, if Isaiah and Daniel both depend on Job 19:25, and Isaiah and Daniel share textual and conceptual correspondence, then the reader can be confident that the biblical authors preserved and developed a hope for the overturning of the curse of the ‘*adāmāh*’ through resurrection.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, since there is an observable agreement across Job 19:25, Daniel 12:2, and Isaiah 26:19 concerning the dead arising to life from the dust, thus overcoming the curse of Genesis 3:19, then it could also be said that these biblical authors are describing the relief from the *adāmāh* that Lamech hoped for (Gen 5:29). Yet, there remains one passage in the OT that brings together the various words and themes across Genesis, Job, Psalm 104:29, Daniel and Isaiah.

### **Ezekiel 37**

Ezekiel 37:1-14 presents a vision of decomposed soldiers who are re-embodied and resuscitated. In the immediate context, this passage would have been seen as a

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<sup>25</sup> Nicetas of Remesiana, “Explanation of the Creed,” in *Isaiah 1-39*, in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament*, vol. 10, ed. Steven A. McKinion and Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 276.

<sup>26</sup> Carol A. Newsom notes the continuity between Genesis, Daniel and Isaiah: “The language of the first phrase in Daniel 12:2 is evocative of Isaiah 26:19 and may be an allusion to it. The construct phrase ‘earth of dust’ (*adāmāh-‘āpār*, ‘dusty earth’) is odd, though perhaps an allusion to Genesis 3:19, where both terms appear in the description of death.” Newsom, *Daniel*, 364.

metaphor for Israel’s release from Babylonian exile.<sup>27</sup> Alternatively, the lexical connections between Ezekiel 37:1-14 and the previously considered passages allude to a meaning beyond political revolution. Ezekiel describes a return to the human destiny which originated in the garden of Eden, with the means of return being described in terms of re-creation and resurrection.<sup>28</sup> In so doing, Ezekiel gathers into one idea the various components of the OT hope for reversal of the curse of the ground by way of resurrection. The first stream of the resurrection undercurrent surging beneath Ezekiel’s vision is Genesis 1-3.

In Ezekiel 37:5-6, God tells Ezekiel that he will cause “breath” (*rûah*) to enter the corpses. The “breath” and “life” in Ezekiel 37:5-6 carry creation undertones from Genesis (see Gen 2:7), thus alluding to re-creation. Then, in Ezekiel 37:14, God states, “I will put my Spirit (*rûah*) within you, and you shall live (*hyh*), and I will place (*nwh*) you in your own ‘*adāmāh*’” followed by the prediction that humanity will “walk in [God’s] rules and be careful (*šmr*) to obey [God’s] statutes” (37:24). The activity of humanity in Ezekiel 37:14 and 24 parallels the activity of ‘*adām*’ in Genesis 2. After ‘*adām*’ receives the breath of life (*rûah*), he is “placed” (*nwh*) in the garden of Eden to work it and “keep” (*šmr*) it (Gen 2:15). God portrays this re-creation event as a return to Edenic human existence. Add to this, in Ezekiel’s vision, God will be in the “midst” (*tā`-wèk*) of humanity (Ezek 37:26, 28). Likewise, the tree of knowledge of good and evil is said to be in the “midst” (*tā`-wèk*) of the garden (Gen 2:9). So then, just as ‘*adām*’ was placed (*nwh*) on the ‘*adāmāh*’ of the garden to keep (*šmr*) it in accordance with the judgement of God

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<sup>27</sup> Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 120.

<sup>28</sup> *Pseudo-Ezekiel* from the Qumran texts (4Q385) sees this passage as more than a metaphor but an actual prediction of resurrection. Newsome, *Daniel*, 363.

Additionally, Jakob Raupius observes that the breath which brings the corpses to life are from the four winds, therefore this cannot mean mere release from exile since the Jews were not collected from the entire globe. In other words, this vision is concerning a global phenomenon, not national. Jakob Raupius, “Commenatius Synopticus,” *Ezekiel, Daniel*, Reformation Commentary on Scripture, vol. 12, ed. Carl L. Beckwith (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 183.

at the tree of knowledge in the midst (*tā`-wèk*) of the garden, so re-created '*ādām* will be placed (*nwh*) on the '*ādāmāh*' and carefully (*šmr*) keep the judgements of God as he is in their midst (*tā`-wèk*). It appears resurrection returns humanity to an Edenic existence. When this vision becomes reality, humanity will possess an essential component it needs to realize the divine image and likeness – God's presence. Ezekiel's nexus with Genesis 2 shows that he understands resurrection to be the means of overcoming the curse of the ground and reinstating humanity to the destiny it was purposed for.

The second stream of the resurrection undercurrent surging beneath Ezekiel's vision is Psalm 104:29-30. The author of Psalm 104:29-30 attributes the "breath" (*rûah*) of God as the source of life for creatures. The absence of God's "breath" results in death, but the application of God's "breath" results in "creation" (*br`*, Ps 104:30 cf. Gen 1:1, 27) and renewal of "the face of the *ādāmāh*" (Ps 104:30 cf. Gen 2:7). It appears that God's creative act of breathing life into man in Genesis 2:7 is in the background of Psalm 104. It is established previously that the significance of Psalm 104:29-30 is that the same source which regulates humanity to ontological frustration, the '*āpār* of the *ādāmāh*, will release humanity to new life. Ezekiel 37:5-6 confirms the resurrection suspicions of Psalm 104:29-30 when God tells Ezekiel that he will cause "breath" (*rûah*) to resuscitate the dead. Thus, the streams of Psalm 104:29-30 and Genesis 1-2 merge together to swell the undercurrent in Ezekiel's resurrection vision.

Beyond Psalm 104, Ezekiel's vision continues to surge with Genesis undercurrents which include touching points with Isaiah and Daniel. Ezekiel writes that the result of God's resuscitation of these corpses is that they will "live" (*hyh*, Ezek 37:5). Isaiah 26:19 uses the same word to depict the state of embodied humans who rise from the dust: "your dead shall live (*hyh*)." Further, Ezekiel mentions God's generating breath and its result again in verse 10: "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath (*rûah*) came into them, and they lived (*hyh*) and stood (*'md*) on their feet, an exceedingly great army." Not only does *rûah* and *hyh* connect Ezekiel's vision of resurrection with

Genesis' creation and Isaiah's prediction of resurrection, but the same word used to describe Daniel's personal resurrection at the end of days is the same word Ezekiel uses to describe the resurrection of these corpses: "and [Daniel] shall rest and stand [ 'md] in [his] allotted place" (Dan 12:13). Altogether, there is textual warrant to assert that Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Daniel may have the same event in mind due to their mutual understanding of the resurrection state (*hyh*), the resurrection means (*rûah*), and the resurrection conclusion ( 'md). Thus, the belief of resurrection from and standing upon the dust of the ground to new life appears to be shared between Moses, Job, the Psalter, Isaiah, Daniel, and now Ezekiel.

### **One Loose Thread**

Lamech foresaw a time when ontological frustration would end in the undoing of the curse of the '*adāmāh*' (Gen 3:19 cf. 5:29). This would require both a renewed '*adāmāh*' and a new '*ādām*'. Yet, the new '*ādām*' who was thought to reverse the curse and renew the '*adāmāh*' succumbed to it. In Genesis 9:20, Noah is domineered by the fruit of the '*adāmāh*' rather than properly exercising dominion over it. Although humanity is spared of annihilation, a different '*ādām*' who will lift the curse of the '*adāmāh*' and relieve humanity is still awaited.

The prophets propose resurrection as the triumph of the curse, and they also propose a figure who will champion this cause. Each one of the prophet's descriptions of this figure shows how the reversal of the curse of the ground will be realized. Daniel's Son of Man achieves the intended destiny of the first son of man, Adam. Ezekiel's Davidic Servant-King trailblazes the way for humanity to dwell with God again. Isaiah's Servant qualifies those who will experience resurrection to everlasting life.

### **Daniel's "Son of Man"**

Daniel envisions a scene in the divine assembly where a human figure relates to God as a son and who represents God as a king. He writes in 7:13-14:

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Here is one who has standing before the Ancient of Days, and who receives “dominion and glory and a kingdom” (7:14). This Son of Man achieves the vision God destined for the first human pair. Remember, if Adam had kept loyalty with God and exercised faithful dominion, he would have brought the world underneath God’s rule (Gen 1:28 cf. 2:15). The dynamic between ‘*adāmāh*’ and ‘*ādām*’ showcases this reality. When ‘*ādām*’ worked and kept the ground according to God’s divine decree, he would extend the borders of the garden outward.<sup>29</sup> Psalm 8 expounds on this original purpose. There, David asks, “what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him” (Ps 8:4)? As David meditates on the human purpose that is revealed in humanity’s creation, he describes humanity’s status and purpose in creation: “a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion” (Ps 8:5-6). David knows that humanity is purposed to occupy a preeminent position in creation and to use this position to rule creation on God’s behalf.<sup>30</sup> With the ideal human destiny in the background (Ps 8:5-6), the reader should see Daniel’s heavenly Son of Man as the figure which executes the directives of this hope. Through the heavenly Son of Man, the preeminent position and dominion over creation that humanity forfeited is reclaimed at last.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, since the Son of Man inherits an

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<sup>29</sup> Beale expounds: “Because Adam and Eve were to subdue and rule ‘over all the earth’, it is plausible to suggest that they were to extend the geographical boundaries of the garden until Eden covered the whole earth. They were on the primeval hillock of hospitable Eden, outside of which lay the inhospitable land. They were to extend the smaller liveable area of the garden by transforming the outer chaotic region into a habitable territory.” G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 81-82, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>30</sup> Hamilton comments that Daniel’s description of the heavenly Son of Man contains features that link it with the promise given to David in 2 Samuel 7, as well as the ideal human destiny details in Psalm 8. James M. Hamilton, Jr., *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 32 (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2015), 147, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>31</sup> Philip Hughes comments on the author of Hebrews’ indication of Christ fulfilling of the son



“everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away” (Dan 7:14), it seems plausible that indestructible resurrection life is implied in this figure’s administration. If this Son of Man figure integrates into the human purpose as both son and king, thus securing as humanity’s champion an everlasting dominion which recovers the Edenic purpose (Gen 1:28), then this figure can be said to fulfill Lamech’s longing for recovery of existential bliss.

### **Ezekiel’s “Servant David”**

Ezekiel may have the same figure in mind. Ezekiel 37:24-28 concludes Ezekiel’s resurrection vision. The preceding context of chapter 37 conveys a resurrection hope which takes on features that reach back to the creation of man in Genesis 2. Budding from the text is the idea that a new humanity will emerge from the ground freed from its curse. Subsequently, the reader observes the figure who will trailblaze this resurrection phenomenon; God’s “servant (*‘èbèd*) David” (Ezek 37:24).<sup>32</sup> What is described thereafter runs parallel with the aforementioned life contained in the new garden of Eden. Ezekiel’s Servant-King will cause God’s people to “be careful” (*šmr*) to obey (Ezek 37:24). The same term is used of Adam when he is said to “keep” (*šmr*) the garden. Additionally, God will “multiply” (*rbh*) his people and he will be in their “midst” (*tā-wèk*, 37:26). This seems to be a recapitulation of the Edenic life, where God commissions Adam and Eve to “multiply” (*rbh*, Gen 1:28) while accessing the tree of life and tree of knowledge which were in the “midst” (*tā-wèk*, Gen 2:9) of the garden. The

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of man ideology in Hebrews 2: “his incarnation was precisely to restore to fallen man the dignity and the wholeness of his existence as he reintegrated in himself the grand design of creation... Only in union with him can man become man as God meant and made him to be.” Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Eerdmans Classic Biblical Commentaries (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 82.

<sup>32</sup> One could contend that Ezekiel 37:24-28 is concerned with the new covenant era only. Certainly, aspects of this passage are fulfilled in the new covenant epoch, but immortal life is abundantly clear in that the servant-king figure will reign forever (37:25), God says he will establish a covenant forever (37:26), and dwell in their midst forever (37:26, 28).

entire picture is that this Servant-King will usher in the new reality that matches the conditions of Eden. In this new reality, humanity will be characterized by activity that echoes Eden (*šmr, rbh*) and will be accompanied by God's presence, which the tree of life and the tree of knowledge are tightly associated with.<sup>33</sup>

This new garden of Eden reality is governed by a Servant-King figure who shares remarkable similarities to Daniel's heavenly Son of Man (Dan 7:14). First, both figures are regal in their presentation. Beyond this, Ezekiel's Servant-King also inaugurates an everlasting dominion: "and David my servant shall be their prince forever" (Ezek 37:25). Altogether, it appears that Daniel and Ezekiel are presented with different visions of the same figure who carries alternative titles, yet all infer the same reality: a new humanity will be recovered through a figure who embodies the ideal humanity as both son and servant, king and prince, and thereby secures an everlasting new Edenic reality. If a new Eden is foreseen, then this new humanity will attain existential bliss since the conditions which made ontological realization possible are restored. Yet, this figure's recovery of the human purpose is more explicitly linked to resurrection elsewhere.

### **Isaiah's "Servant"**

Isaiah, in chapter 52-53, describes a "servant" (*'ēbēd*) who appears to resurrect from the dead. Although resurrection is not specifically mentioned, it is clear this Servant dies and is buried (53:7-9) and re-appears victorious over death (53:10-12).<sup>34</sup> Beyond

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<sup>33</sup> This statement is verified when Moses records the construction and assembly of the tabernacle. He describes the menorah's light shining upon the shewbread, which together represented God's blessing over the twelve tribes of Israel. Significantly, since the tabernacle is patterned after the garden of Eden, the menorah represents the tree of life in the garden, which also symbolizes God's life-giving presence. L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 37 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 16, 102, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>34</sup> Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 116.

Additionally, Paul seems to understand the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 to die and resurrect. He writes in Romans 4:25 that Christ "was delivered (*paradidōmi*) up for our trespasses and raised for our justification." This language is borrowed from the LXX version of Isaiah, where the servant is "delivered

this, there are several lexical connections with the above resurrection passages. Both Isaiah and Ezekiel discuss a “servant” (*‘èbèd*, Is 52:13 cf. Ezek 37:24). The Servant in Isaiah is said to make many “righteous” (*sdq*, Is 53:11), just as Daniel qualifies those who resurrect as “those who turn many to righteousness” (*sdq*, Dan 12:3). Additionally, the Servant will act “wisely” (*škl*, Is 52:13), just as Daniel qualifies those who resurrect as “the wise” (*škl*, Dan 12:3). More significantly, Daniel’s imagery of the resurrected as lights in the heavens (Dan 12:3) may match the description assigned to Isaiah’s Servant when he is said to “be high and lifted up” and “exalted” (Is 52:13).<sup>35</sup> Besides this, both Isaiah and Daniel identify the “many” (*ràb*) as the benefactors of resurrection. When taken together, it appears that Isaiah’s Servant dies and rises, and in turn makes the “many” both “righteous” and “wise,” which Daniel picks up on and utilizes to categorize the population of humanity that rises to everlasting life. Since Isaiah’s Servant spearheads the resurrection, the notions cultivated between Job and Isaiah of standing with an embodied Redeemer on the same surface could very well be contained here.

Synthesized together, the prophets generate a profile of a figure who will fulfill the wishes of Lamech from Genesis 5:29. Daniel foresees a “Son of Man” who inherits the world, just as Adam would have had he not failed. Ezekiel sees a “Servant David” who will govern an environment that is described in terms reminiscent of Eden, thus allowing for humanity to realize its original purpose. Isaiah articulates how exactly this “Servant” will recover the Edenic reality and human destiny: resurrection. This figure is the one who will bring relief from the pain that mankind feels due to the cursed ground and is the one who will relieve God of the pain that he feels due to the corruption of

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(*paradidōmi*) up... for our sins” (53:6 LXX) and later “his soul was delivered (*paradidōmi*) up to death” and “delivered (*paradidōmi*) up for the sake of their sins” (53:12 LXX). Based on Paul’s ascription of language from Isaiah 53 to Christ, it seems natural, then, to assume that his statement “raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:25) is included in his forging between the suffering servant and Christ. Therefore, Paul believes Isaiah 53 to contain suggestions of resurrection. David G. Peterson, *Romans*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 225–226, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>35</sup> Newsome, *Daniel*, 364.

mankind.

### Conclusion

Lamech's prophetic exclamation that the curse of the ground will be lifted reveals a hope for humanity to recover its purpose of kinship and kingship. The later biblical authors understand his desire will be fulfilled by resurrection. Job speaks of a Redeemer who "lives" (*hày*) and who will "stand" (*qwm*) on the "dust" (*'āpār*) with him, face to face. It appears the surface which defines humanity's anguish – the dust – will become the place of humanity's restoration. Psalm 104:29-30 envisions an act of recreation occurring from the "dust" upon the "face of the '*ādāmāh*'." The Psalm uses creation language (*rūah*) to convey that the idioms which captured human anguish will no longer do so. The prophets demonstrate an awareness of Job's resurrection hope as seen in their lexical connections with it. Daniel anticipates resurrection from the '*āpār*' of the '*ādāmāh*' to "life" (*hày*), which is the term used for Job's Redeemer's "life" (*hày*) as well as the "life" that God generates in Genesis 2:7. This means those who are resurrected will share in the same life that God possesses, which God also shared with '*ādām*' when he created him. Isaiah, in describing the resurrection movement of the dead, uses the same term that Job uses for when God is "standing" (*qwm*) upon the dust. This could mean that Job anticipates a time when God is standing on the dust with others who are standing with him. Next, Ezekiel foresees a new humanity that is generated by the "breath" (*rūah*) of God, then "placed" (*nwh*) on the '*ādāmāh*' where they will "carefully" (*šmr*) obey God. The recording of this vision has touching points with the creation of '*ādām*' and the experience of '*ādām*' in the garden. Thus, Ezekiel sees humanity undergoing a re-creation like the first and a reinstatement to the original setting of Eden. Finally, each of the prophets disclose a figure who will lead humanity towards this end. So then, Lamech's hope of relief from the ground through will be realized through resurrection, with a new '*ādām*' leading the way.

## CHAPTER 6

### RECOVERING HUMANITY

One of the happiest scenes in all fictional literature is the resurrection and reappearance of Gandalf in *The Return of the King*. Upon recognizing Gandalf, Sam exclaims, “Gandalf, I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What’s happened to the world?” Sam is expressing his astonishment at the presence of Gandalf, once dead, and now alive. For Sam, this must mean that the dark threat of Sauron may soon dispel. Gandalf replies, “A great shadow has departed,” and Tolkien comments, “then he laughed and the sound was like music, or like water in a parched land; and as he listened the thought came to Sam that he had not heard laughter, the pure sound of merriment, for days upon days without count.”<sup>1</sup> This exchange illustrates the experience of those who depart from the old *’ādām* and unite to the new *’ādām*; the sadness of the curse of the ground comes untrue as death’s shadow departs and a merriment from another time – the time before the curse - takes its place.

#### **Meeting the New *’Ādām***

The prophets anticipate a new *’ādām* who will usher humanity into existential bliss by resurrecting from the same source which denied it; the *’ādāmāh*. This anticipation originates in the unfulfilled longing of Lamech in Genesis 5:29; “Out of the *’ādāmāh* that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from the work and from the painful toil of our hands.” Since Noah’s failure (Gen 9:20) reveals that he will not

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<sup>1</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 930-31.

champion this endeavor, the wait continues. Later, the authors of Job, Psalm 104, as well as Ezekiel, Daniel and Isaiah all recognize the necessity for resurrection from the ‘*adāmāh*’ in order to experience relief from its curse.

Yet, returning to Moses in Genesis, the hope for humanity byway of the ‘*adāmāh*’ again makes an appearance. Just beyond Lamech’s exclamation lies the call of Abram (Gen 12:1). If the reader analyzes the unfolding story, including the genealogies, with sensitivity to its recurring details, they are prepared for its next iteration, where hope for ‘*ādām*’ is signaled through the ‘*adāmāh*’.

Just as God preserved the human purpose through Adam’s third son and Noah’s third son, God preserves the human purpose through Terah’s third son, Abram (11:27). Just as God preserved the human purpose through the tenth from Seth, Noah, so God preserves the human purpose through the tenth from Shem, Abram (11:27). Altogether, Abram is distinguished as the one who inherits the mantle of humanity’s champion.<sup>2</sup> When God calls Abram, he confers the same mission he initially gave to both Adam and Noah; just as God “blessed” (*brk*, 1:28) Adam and then a following commission, and just as God “blessed” Noah (*brk*, 9:1) and followed with the same commission, now he will “bless” (*brk*) Abram so that he would “be a blessing” (12:2).<sup>3</sup> It appears the special relationship and enterprise laid before Adam and Noah is now Abram’s. A further connection is forged when God tells Abram that he will “curse” (*rr*, 12:3) those who dishonor Abram, which lexically echoes the cursing God enacted upon the serpent (3:14), upon the ‘*adāmāh*’ (3:17; 5:29), and upon the Cainite family (4:11; 9:25). Abram is selected to perpetuate the new humanity, one that will be in right relationship with God (“I will bless you,” 12:2) and represent him faithfully (“you will be

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<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 224.

<sup>3</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 226.

a blessing,” 12:2). This new humanity will co-exist but remain distinguished from the rest of humanity that is “cursed” (‘*rr*, 12:3).<sup>4</sup> If Abraham maintains special relationship to God and faithfully carries out this enterprise without compromising into the cursed line of humanity, then potentially Lamech’s wishes for the overturning of the curse of the ground will be fulfilled, as Abram is told; “in you all the families of the ‘*adāmāh*’ shall be blessed” (12:3, 28:14). It seems as if the human purpose of relationship with God and representing him established in Genesis 1:28 has been preserved through Noah and is now passed to Abram and his descendants. God intends to recover the human purpose through the seed of Abraham, and for centuries the expectation for this recovery remained.

The wait concludes upon the arrival of the son of Abraham (Matt 1:1); the son of Noah and Adam (Luke 3:36, 38). This same figure claims to be the Danielic Son of Man who integrates into the human experience as both son and king and who will inaugurate an everlasting dominion (Matt 26:64). This Son of Man is the same Servant-King figure described by Isaiah and Ezekiel, who would restore the human destiny through resurrection. This latter identity is validated upon the phenomenon which follows his death. Once Jesus dies, “saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (Matt 27:52). The wording Matthew chooses is close to the LXX version of Ezekiel 27:12-13 and Isaiah 26:19, where Israel’s exile is framed in resurrection hope.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this phenomenon and the way it is recorded is to confirm that Jesus is in fact the figure who will bring about resurrection life and existential bliss. But alas, must humanity wait till the end of the age to realize its ontological potential, the divine image and likeness?

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<sup>4</sup> See fuller explanation in chap. 4.

<sup>5</sup> N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 3 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2003), 633, Kindle.

## **Future Resurrection, Present Relief**

Although the human purpose will be realized to full measure in the resurrection of the dead, it is already increasingly realized by the believer through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the seed of Abraham who will fulfill the longing of Lamech so that all families of the ‘*adāmāh*’ recover the human purpose – existential bliss as kin and king – by realizing their ontological potential through bodily resurrection and already through spiritual renewal, thus overcoming the curse of the ground.

### **1 Corinthians 15: Heaven Meets Earth**

Humanity’s existential frustration will ultimately end when those who “have borne the image of the man of dust” are transformed to “bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 Cor 15:49). This transition from Adam’s image to Christ’s image is accomplished through resurrection (15:42), and resurrection results in a new body (15:44). The reason this transition must accompany a new body is because the current mortal body, which is dishonored and weak (15:43), is not capable of definitively securing existential bliss. The bodies humanity has inherited from Adam are corrupted by and limited by sin; the body must and will undergo transformation. The resurrection-transformation of the human body will fulfill the OT vision of a future Edenic existence (Ezek 37:5-6, 14, 24, 26, 28) that is ushered in by a resurrected figurehead (Dan 7:14, 27; Ezek 37:24; Is 52:13, 53:10-12). Paul takes these anticipations as fulfilled in the resurrected Jesus, but with one major development: ontological realization and existential bliss will not occur because human bodies are placed in Eden, but instead because Eden is placed within the human body.

This is argued first in Paul’s statement that what is sown must die before it attains its final form (1 Cor 15:36). For the human telos to be attained, the mortal body must first die so that a new body can rise. He proves this point by exemplifying the different kinds of bodies and their varying glories (human and animal, heavenly and earthly; 15:39-41). This leads Paul to conclude that the mortal body must die so that it



can attain to the glorified body, moving from a version of human existence that is characterized by “dishonor” and “weakness” to one that is characterized by “glory” and “power” (15:43). Moreover, the mortal body is “perishable,” whereas the resurrected body will be “imperishable” (15:42). Lastly, he states the mortal body is “natural,” and the raised body is “spiritual” (15:44). To inherit this transformation requires transitioning from being “in Adam” to being “in Christ,” as Paul states at the beginning of the passage: “For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (15:21-22). Paul has then set up the rationale for transition from Adam to Christ: in Adam, humanity inherits the consequences of his failure,<sup>6</sup> but in Christ, humanity inherits the consequences of his resurrection. So then, in the resurrection one should expect to inhabit a body that is like Christ’s resurrected body, not Adam’s. This is Paul’s point in asserting that “just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (15:49). The resurrected righteous will resemble the risen Christ. This bodily transformation overcomes the disadvantaged bodies inherited from Adam which, without the conditions of the garden of Eden, are not capable of achieving realized ontological potential.

This description of the glorified human body and its patterning after the risen Christ’s, therefore, has massive implications for overcoming the curse of the ground and realizing ontological potential. One inference is that resurrection restores to humanity a source that fulfills its ontological composition which necessarily leads to existential bliss – access to heaven. Sharing in Christ’s resurrection reconnects humanity with heaven: “just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the

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<sup>6</sup> Because humanity is in the “image” of the man of dust, and due to the descriptions of the mortal body, “dishonor,” “weakness” and “natural,” Kilner writes: “That sin produces rebellion against God (Gen 3) and murder against humanity (Gen 4). One might expect Seth’s life, and by extension everyone’s life thereafter ... to be filled with the same. If the actual picture temporally and eternally does not end up nearly that bleak, it is only because God’s grace ... intervenes.” John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2015), 151, Kindle.

man of heaven” (1 Cor 15:49). Recall that Adam is created from the overflow of the divine (Gen 1:26-27), as well as from the dust of the earth. It would be appropriate, then, to understand him as a being who is a product of both heaven and earth. Subsequently, the human is a being who mediates the rule of the divine realm to the creation through relationship with the divine in the context of earth.<sup>7</sup> This is the ontological composition within each person; an instinct for divine fellowship which reaches a tipping point and spills over into meaningful dominion. Stephen Dempster supports this idea when he argues that the genealogy in Genesis 2:4, which speaks of the offspring of “the heavens and the earth,” begins the narrative of the human pair’s creation and becomes the pattern for all the following human genealogies. It is significant that “heaven and earth” fill the slot where names are thereafter inserted. This is to show that the first human pair is the offspring of the creation of the heavens and earth.<sup>8</sup> This means that humans ought to be beings who interact with heaven while occupying earth. This purpose is rendered impossible to fulfill when the ground is cursed and Adam is told “for you are dust, and to dust you will return” (Gen 3:19), which is commenced by exile, and thus, loss of access to the tree of life and fragmented fellowship with the divine (3:22-24). Mortality, then, completely gives humanity over to its earthly origin. Interaction with heaven is forfeited. Uniting heaven to earth is impossible. Since access to heaven is lost, the transcendent purpose which accompanied being a product of heaven is lost and all that remains is humanity’s relationship with the dust. Altogether, the mortal body, with its sin and

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Gentry writes, “As servant king and son of God mankind will mediate God’s rule to the creation in the context of a covenantal relationship with God on the one hand and the earth on the other.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 201.

See also Patrick D. Miller, Jr, *Genesis 1-11: Studies in Structure and Theme*, Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 8 (Sheffield, England: The University of Sheffield, 1978), 19-20. Miller writes, “this way of speaking may be in order to underscore further the exalted nature and function being given to the human creature.”

<sup>8</sup> Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 63, Logos Bible Software.

frailties, incapacitates humanity from achieving its purpose. For full ontological realization, humanity must return to the original state of being a product of heaven and earth, which is exactly what Jesus, “the man of heaven” (1 Cor 15:49), restores to humanity. Resurrected humanity will enjoy unrestricted access to heaven once again.

In short, human ontological potential is completely realized because of Jesus’ resurrection, by the act of resurrection, and by the outcome of resurrection. By union with Jesus, persons benefit from his resurrection: “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (15:22). Jesus’ resurrection qualifies him to apply it to others: “‘The first man Adam became a living being,’ the last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (15:45). The result of this resurrection life, beyond bodily animation, is that the human body becomes suitable for spiritual living; it is a “spiritual body” (15:44).<sup>9</sup> Once this infusion of Jesus’ life-giving spirit occurs, those who receive it will “bear the image of the man of heaven” (15:49). Thus, persons located on earth will possess the existence, or the kind of humanity, Jesus does. It is a shift from one mode of existence to another – from heaven-less humanity on earth to heavenly humanity on earth.<sup>10</sup> That is to say, those resurrected will remain human, but enjoy reconnection to heaven. This is the original human destiny; a being who is a product of both heaven and earth, enjoying the former and conducting it into the latter, tethering both together into one reality.

The conclusion of glorious bodily transformation is a human who has returned to the garden of Eden reality, but who has also superseded the former Eden because their

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<sup>9</sup> N. T. Wright states the meaning of the phrase, “the last Adam became a life-giving spirit” is “the most elegant way he can find of saying both that the new body is the result of the Spirit’s work (answering ‘how does it come to be?’) and that it is the appropriate vessel for the Spirit’s life (answering ‘what sort of a thing is it?’).” Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 353.

Wayne Gruden, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academics, 2020), 1022. Grudem comment on the meaning of “spiritual body” agrees with my conclusion about resurrection realizing ontological potential: the spiritual body is “completely subject to the will of the Holy Spirit and responsive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Such a body is not at all ‘nonphysical,’ but it is a physical body raised to the degree of perfection for which God originally intended it.”

<sup>10</sup> N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 355-56.

body will also possess in and of itself the resources of the garden. Specifically, the immortality associated with the tree of life will be resourced within the resurrected body. This is attested in the meaning of the tree of life symbolism in the book of Revelation. John writes, “also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month” (Rev 22:2).<sup>11</sup> Those who access the tree of life are those who have washed their robes (22:14). This imagery is alluding to the immortality that resurrected individuals will inherently possess, in their glorified, spiritual bodies.<sup>12</sup> John does not have a literal tree in mind, since there is no such singular tree that is on both sides of a river, nor one that produces twelve kinds of fruit every month of the year (22:2). The purpose of the symbolic, OT laden imagery is to convey vitality that is always accessible and abundant, with no expiration and no threat.<sup>13</sup> In the first garden, Adam required access to the tree of life to live eternally, but in the final garden, humanity will themselves be infused with abundant life.<sup>14</sup> This seems to be included in what Paul is referring to when he says that the natural body is raised a “spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:44) through the last Adam who is “a life-giving spirit” (15:45).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Revelation is littered with symbolic imagery which suggests true reality, so the reader should understand this description not to be a literal depiction of life post-resurrection, but instead imagery adapted from the OT story in order to convey what the reality will be like.

<sup>12</sup> L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 303-04, Logos Bible Software. Morales mentions that the cherubim guarding the “way to the tree of life” (Gen 3:24), rendering entry impossible, is where the narrative left off. Revelation opens up the way to the tree of life again.

<sup>13</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 403, Kindle. See Ezekiel 47:7-12 for OT prophecy which corresponds to John’s new Eden in Revelation 22.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Ellul offers an alternative meaning of the tree of life in the new Eden. In agreement with my proposition, Ellul sees the tree of life as symbolic rather than literal, noting its details would render an absurd interpretation. In contrast, he states that the tree of life is better translated “wood of life,” and it refers to the cross of Christ. He sees the new Eden as the climactic fulfillment of all redemptive history, with this “living sign, in the center of the city, of the healing and the nourishment which men have received from Christ, in his death.” Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, trans. Dennis Pardee (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 208.

<sup>15</sup> Ezekiel 37:26-28 foretells of a time when God will be in his people’s midst, which is confirmed by Revelation 22:1-4. When humanity is transformed and rid of weakness and sin, and imbued with immortal life, humanity will be fit for God’s presence, no longer under threat of exile because of sin or disobedience, and no longer under threat of mortality. The essential pieces humanity needs to have access

Yet, this final Edenic reality possesses another important distinction from the original: humanity is guaranteed to reach the final goal of the Edenic state in a superior body to the first Adam. As developed previously, if Adam were successful in his dominion enterprise, he would have brought the entire world underneath the reign of God.<sup>16</sup> This would cause heaven to totally unite to earth as God's heavenly rule would envelope the globe (Hab 2:14; Is 11:9, 45:18; Ps 8). The difference is that Adam and Eve, and thus the following humanity,<sup>17</sup> would still have a destructible body all while living immortally due to access to the tree of life. But in the resurrection, humanity will have an indestructible body and live immortally without the need for a tree of life.<sup>18</sup> G. K. Beale argues that what Paul alludes to in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 is that Jesus, as the last Adam, achieved the status that the first Adam was meant to. He contends that if Adam had successfully carried out his enterprise to subdue the entire earth, Adam would have achieved the glorified body that Jesus has endowed with.<sup>19</sup> Because there is no textual evidence for this proposed implication, it remains only a plausibility.<sup>20</sup> Still, the trajectory

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to so that its ontological potential is realized are accessible. The tree of life is one of these essential pieces, which is specifically mentioned in Revelation 22. The other essential piece is fellowship with God at the tree of knowledge. Revelation 22:3 may allude to the tree of knowledge when it states "his servants will worship him." Genesis 2:15-16 says that man will "work" and "keep" alongside God's decree; this is also translated as "worship" and "serve." Revelation 22:3, then, may contain this idea in describing inhabitants of the new Eden as servant who worship.

<sup>16</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 83, Logos Bible Software. Further, Genesis 1:28 explicitly states this intention: "fill the earth and subdue it."

<sup>17</sup> See Genesis 5:3 where Adam's offspring are said to be in his likeness and after his image, thus conferring the divine image and likeness.

<sup>18</sup> This is further evidenced when Paul says that death will be eliminated ("The last enemy to be destroyed is death"), which indicates that the believer's immortality will be irreversible; death will no longer be a threat or alternative. G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 261.

<sup>19</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 262.

Beale argues that the commission in Genesis 1:28 implies (1) a point when the goal of worldwide submission would reach its climactic end, (2) anticipates an eschatological Adam figure who triumphs over opposition (Ps 72:4, 8-14; 89:19-27) and who reigns endlessly (Ps 89:27-29, 33-37; 2 Sam. 7:12-19). Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 36.

<sup>20</sup> I affirm that the resurrection body is both different and superior to the bodies which Adam and Eve inhabited. I speculate – and this is strong speculation – that in a world without sin, Adam and Eve

of Adam and Eve's obedience would have brought the entire world in submission to God's dominion, thereby always having access to the tree of life, thus living eternally. But when the last Adam comes from heaven to earth and transforms lowly bodies into glorious bodies, the tree of life immortality will imbue humanity, and there will be no threat or obstacle to achieving the end of the original Edenic horizon – a global temple, maintained by those in God's image, where God dwells with those in his likeness.

With humanity at last existing as it ought, as products of both heaven and earth, and now with the tree of life innate to the body, all the items needed to realize ontological potential have been issued. When heaven comes to earth, resurrected humanity will be made fit for residence in it. But resurrection does more than relieve humanity of the curse of the ground; it also relieves the ground of its cursed existence.

### **Romans 8:18-23: Heaven Liberates Earth**

After speaking of the Holy Spirit's validation of the Christian's salvation (Rom 8:16) and eternal destiny (8:17), Paul pivots his discourse to explore implications for the latter. Specifically, Paul says that there will be a glory revealed "to us" (8:18). This begs the question, what glory will be witnessed by those who are "glorified with [Christ]" (8:17)? The answer is both their own resurrection and the renewal of the ground. This is confirmed in the proceeding verses.

Creation's part is introduced next as Paul writes that it "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (8:19). It should be no surprise that humanity's resurrection catches the attention of creation since humanity and the ground share an inextricable relationship (see chapters 2-3). Paul makes this connection between man and the ground in the following verses: "For the creation was subjected to futility,

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could not die by sickness or violence. But their bodies were not indestructible, therefore with the laws of nature in place, hypothetically they could have died due to a mortal wound, or from natural causes which existed in the creation order, such as gravity or drowning.

not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (8:20-21). Operating underneath these verses is the curse of the ground (Gen 3:19) and its overturning (Is 26:19) due to the restoration of humanity’s original purpose. These will be explored in turn.

The curse of the ground (Gen 3:19) frustrates the divine image and the divine likeness. Humanity was to exercise dominion and extend the boundaries of the garden across the world, bring all creation underneath God’s rule. Humanity was also to dwell with God in fellowship. Upon disobedience, humanity is regulated to work the ground with difficulty, and to return to the ground from which it was taken. In sum, the ontological potential of mankind goes unrealized while under the tyranny of the curse of the ground. Conversely, creation experiences “futility” (Rom 8:20) because it will not achieve its grand telos underneath the care of sinful, violent humanity,<sup>21</sup> and creation experiences “bondage to corruption” (8:21) because it houses the decomposing bodies of humans that were never meant to return to dust.<sup>22</sup> Further, if the curse of the ground has affected humanity and creation negatively, then it’s overturning will affect both positively.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, upon resurrection, the ground will no longer exist in “futility” and its “bondage to corruption” will be eliminated. The “freedom of the glory of the children of man” (8:21) will be shared with creation too. At the least this means when humanity is resurrected, creation will be subdued properly towards its original end, if not total

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<sup>21</sup> David G. Peterson, *Romans*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 325, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas J. Moo, “Nature in the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment,” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 3 (September 2006), 461. Douglas Moo comments that Romans 8:20-21 suggests that “creation has been unable to attain the purpose for which it was created.” The same word Paul uses for “decay” (*phthora*) is used by him in 1 Corinthians 15:42 and 50 to describe the “perishable” body and the “imperishable” body. Thus, it should be natural to surmise that creation’s bondage is to the decomposition occurring in it. Not only does creation’s “bondage to corruption” include decomposition, but it could also include the idea of polluted ground from unatoned blood (Gen 4:10; 6:11).

<sup>23</sup> Moo, “Nature in the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment,” 462.

renovation of creation at the same time of the resurrection. Additionally, this means the ground will never again collect the dust of humans, but instead serve as the setting for humanity to dwell uninterrupted with God.<sup>24</sup>

Just in case there is any confusion about the relationship between man and the ground in Romans 8, Paul continues to the next verses to explicitly connect humanity and creation again. In doing so, Paul connects the phenomenon of resurrection and new creation with Isaiah's prophecy. He writes that creation "has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now" (8:22). Why does Paul frame the relationship in labor language? Because Isaiah 26:19 does. There, Isaiah predicts that "the earth will give birth to the dead." Before this, Isaiah captures Israel's anticipation of deliverance as a woman pregnant, crying in pain, near giving birth, but to no avail (Is 26:16-18). It seems as if Paul has collapsed Israel's longing for a new exodus, which is depicted as labor pains, and the earth birthing the dead from it, into one idea: the climactic event where the earth is restored by releasing humans through resurrection. That Paul means to connect these passages may be attested by his usage of the same word for "pains of childbirth" (root *ōdin*) that the LXX uses for "labor" and "pain" in Isaiah 26:17. Sandra Richter summarizes these connections well:

the *'adāmāh'* is as repelled by *'adām'*'s presence with it as we are. The very dust of the earth longs for this wrong to be made right, for the soil to be free of its accursed state as the recipient of Adam's children, for humanity to be delivered from the role of fertilizer. So like a mother bringing forth a child, the *'adāmāh'* is groaning in childbirth even now, longing for the day when the child is delivered, when *'adām'* is raised up from the dirt... Romans 8 makes it clear that the goal of redemption is far broader than the simple salvation of the individual. Redemption is a cosmic plan of cosmic proportions. God's plan is that all creation will be "saved" from the effects

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<sup>24</sup> Moo, "Nature in the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment," 462. Moo writes, "Indeed, the glory that humans will experience, involving as it does the resurrection of the body (8:9-11, 23) necessarily requires an appropriate environment for that embodiment." This is conceptually linked to Ezekiel 37, where the world is described in terms reminiscent of the garden, thus showing that the resurrection life will have an environment conducive to it, thus allowing ontological potential to be realized.

David G. Peterson adds, "So it is that the 'new heavens and new earth' correspond to man's new, resurrection body." Peterson, *Romans*, 326.



of sin.<sup>25</sup>

Lamech longed for the day when the curse of the ground would be broken, and the prophets joined him in his lament. Romans 8 demonstrates that humanity and the ground share a destiny. When humanity is restored to its proper existence, so the ground will be. Thus, when humanity rises from the dust to never again return, and exercises dominion properly over it, creation's groan will be replaced with its intended glory. Creation can be what it was meant to be when humanity is. This will occur when God brings all things to their consummative end. But even now, the believer can begin to experience the bliss they will enjoy forever.

### **Galatians 3:10-14: Heaven Breaking into Earth**

Paul connects the blessing of Abraham (Gen 12:3) to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To review, God's purpose for humanity as king and kin, the realized ontological potential, is originated in Adam, and then transitioned to Noah (9:1-4), and finally transitioned to Abram (12:1-3). Beyond the motif of blessing and cursing, the interplay between '*ādām*' and '*adāmāh*' signals this continuity. When the reader maintains an awareness of the '*ādām*-'*adāmāh*' motif through Genesis 1-12, they will see the arch of human existence move from bliss (2:5-25), to despair (3:1-4:16; 6:1-9:20), to anticipated restoration (5:25; 12:3). This anticipated restoration is longed for by Lamech (5:25; "out of the '*adāmāh*' that the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief") and commenced in Abram's call (12:3; "all the families of the '*adāmāh*' will be blessed"). He is chosen as the '*ādām*' who will bring about a renewed humanity who will realize their ontological potential. This means the nation that comes from Abram will co-exist but remain distinguished from the despairing line of humanity. If Abraham maintains special relationship to God and faithfully carries out this enterprise without compromising into

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<sup>25</sup> Sandra L. Richter, *Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 115.

the cursed line of humanity, then a blessed humanity will result and Lamech's wishes will be fulfilled. God intends to create a new humanity through Abraham, and this new humanity will overcome the curse of the ground.

Paul picks up on this in Galatians 3:10-14. Throughout these verses, Paul describes those under the law as those who are "cursed." Paul understands this curse to be eliminated when one, through Christ, inherits the blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14). In order to show how Paul understands the blessing of Abraham to overcome the curse of the ground, it must be proven that the curse for transgressing the law is related to the curse of the ground.

First, the curse of the ground is lexically subverted in Abram's call (Gen 3:17, "cursed is the 'adāmāh'," cf. Gen 12:3; "all families of the 'adāmāh' will be blessed"). So, if Paul believes the fulfillment of the promise to Abram to be the conclusion of the curse of the law, it would be natural to include the curse of the ground since it is lexically related to the promise. To strengthen this intertwined understanding, the curse of the ground is included in the fivefold cursing found in Genesis 1-11 (3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25), which matches the fivefold blessing within Abram's call (12:1-3).<sup>26</sup> If this synchronism is intentional, then God's call to Abram introduces the commitment to reverse every curse, including the curse of the ground. To strengthen this point further, Moses' description of the curses and blessings of the law in Deuteronomy 28-30 shares similarities with the description of the exile from of the garden, and its converse, life in the garden. Consequently, this means cursed humanity are those who are alienated from God and from the sources which allow realized ontological potential.<sup>27</sup> L. Michael

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<sup>26</sup> L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 20, Kindle.

See the table in Matt Champlin, "A Biblical Theology of Blessing in Genesis," *Themelios* 42, no. 1 (2017), 64. His table breaks down the occurrences of blessing and cursing as delineated by the genealogies in Genesis.

<sup>27</sup> N. T. Wright comments: "The remedy for this held out in this passage in Deuteronomy itself is not the usual Rabbinic scheme of repentance, sacrifice, and atonement; it is the scheme, which so many

Morales observes Moses' connection between alienation from God and fellowship with God and their respective outcomes, to life in conformity with the law and life in disharmony with the law:

Within the garden YHWH had set both a tree of life and a tree of knowledge of good and evil. Taken together, with their fruits procuring life and death respectively, the trees may be seen to function like the Torah... 'Behold, today I have set before you life and good, and death and evil... life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live' (Deut 30:15, 19).<sup>28</sup>

So then, obedience and disobedience to the law and the respective outcome is linked to life in the garden or exile from it. Purportedly then, if the curse of the law is portrayed in terms that find their origin in the garden exile, and the curse of the ground is the preamble to this exile, it is natural to include it in the criteria that would be transported into the curse of the law.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, other touching points exist between Genesis 2-3 and the curse of the law in Deuteronomy 28-30 which show Moses has in mind the loss and restoration of the human purpose. First, Deuteronomy 28-30 mentions "walking" (*hлк*, cf. Gen 3:8) in God's ways,<sup>30</sup> "keeping" (*šmr*, cf. Gen 2:15) God's "commandments" (root *swh*, cf. Gen 2:16), the promise to "multiply" (*rbh*, cf. Gen 1:28) and of "blessing" (*brk*, cf. Gen 1:28). Also, there is warning against "serving" (*bd*, cf. Gen 2:15) other gods and a following threat of certainty of death (Deut 30:18 cf. Gen 2:17). Further, just as "heaven and earth" serve as the origin of human genealogical pattern, thus characterizing humanity as a product of heaven and earth (Gen 2:4), now in Deuteronomy 30:19, "heaven and earth"

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books of the Old Testament see work out in Israel's history, of exile and restoration, of judgment followed by mercy." N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1991), 146.

<sup>28</sup> Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 54.

<sup>29</sup> Wenham says that the curse of the ground "hint(s) at the drastic changes that will shortly overtake the man." Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1987), 83.

<sup>30</sup> In Genesis, the godly are those who "walked" with God (Gen 5:22-23; 6:9; 17:1). John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 474.

are a witness against humanity.<sup>31</sup> Finally, Deuteronomy 30 ends with a promise of residence in the land with God described in terms reminiscent of the tree of life: “he is your life (*hày*, cf. Gen 2:9, ‘tree of life [*hày*]’) and length of days.” So then, Moses describes the curse of the law in terms and ideas that trace their origin to the exile from the garden, and the blessing of obedience in terms and ideas that echo the experience of the garden.<sup>32</sup> Certainly, human existence in the garden is in mind, the very existence that the curse of the ground impeded.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, if Christ redeems humanity “from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Gal 3:13), and Paul understands this redemption to originate in the promised blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14), which is also a direct counterpart to the curses before it, then whatever secures this redemption and blessing must also relieve all the counterpart curses. This then includes the curse of the ground – existential anguish due to unrealized ontological potential. The phenomenon that secures this relief is the indwelling of the “promised Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14). When one unites to Christ by faith and is indwelt by the promised Holy Spirit, the shadow of existential anguish begins to lift as one phases out of the cursed line of despairing humanity and into the blessed line of renewed humanity. This will be fully accomplished in the resurrection but is already initiated by uniting oneself in faith to Christ.<sup>34</sup> That the Holy Spirit secures the

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<sup>31</sup> Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 63.

<sup>32</sup> Sailhamer comments: “Moses closes this section with several allusions to the first instance of the revelation of the will of God in the Scriptures, Adam in the Garden of Eden. His purpose is to draw a comparison between the first work of God in providing a ‘good land’ for his people and the situation of Israel as they prepare to enter again into God’s good land... Carefully choosing his words to reflect back on these earlier themes, in the Pentateuch, Moses skillfully draws his book to a conclusion by returning to its central themes.” Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 474.

<sup>33</sup> Recall my explanation of intertextuality in chap. 1. There I reference G. K. Beale, who practices this method of biblical-theological interpretation, calling the earlier referenced Scripture to have a “thick description,” which the later Scripture presupposes, carrying into it secondary ideas of the primary text without explicitly alluding to them. G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 25, Kindle. This means an allusion to a previous text may have a larger, presupposed scope which gathers into it relevant associates and ideas.

<sup>34</sup> Moises Silva, *Galatians, Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. D.A. Carson and G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 794.

promise to Abraham, that “all the families of the ‘*adāmāh*’ would be blessed” (Gen 12:3), and thus restores to humanity its original purpose, is confirmed by Galatians 4:5: “so that we might receive adoption as sons.”<sup>35</sup> The divine likeness embedded within humanity longs for fellowship with the divine, as a son to a Father. Now, through the Holy Spirit, the connection with the divine has been restored and the divine likeness can be increasingly realized.

With these connections forged, it is as if humanity is presently re-connected to the sources which are necessary to realize its ontological potential. This is hinted at in Ezekiel 36, when God gives “a new heart, and a new spirit” (Ezek 36:25) resulting in the blessed life described in Deuteronomy 30. Specifically, those who undergo this transformation will “walk (*hlk*) in [God’s] statutes and be careful (*šmr*) to obey all [his] rules” (Ezek 36:27 cf. Deut 30:8). Beyond this, the land that will be dwelt in again is cast in terms that recall the garden of Eden.<sup>36</sup> The land is said to be “tilled” (*‘bd*, Ezek 36:9 cf. Gen 2:15), and people will be “multiplied” and “fruitful” (*rbh* and *prh*, Ezek 36:10-11 cf. Gen 1:28). It appears the land will revert to a place that is fitting for humanity to dwell. Yet, this prediction in Ezekiel 36 is referring to the character of the age that is launched by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the land blessings in Ezekiel 36 then must refer to a present reality that is experienced by those indwelt by the Spirit. Indwelt believers, then, are this new garden of Eden; they have access to God’s presence, who is their life and length of days (Deut 30:20) and who can now obey his voice (Deut 30:20 cf. Ezek 36:27). It seems the sources which deem the divine image and likeness expressed and realized, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, are presently accessible

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<sup>35</sup> James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments*, NAC Studies in Bible & Theology (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 123.

<sup>36</sup> In Ezekiel 36:35, Ezekiel explicitly states that the new land will be like the garden of Eden. Also, since the descriptions of the persons and the land in Ezekiel 36 share similarities with the resurrection passage of Ezekiel 37, it is evident that Ezekiel 36 is depicting the “already” experience of the future resurrection.

to the believer through the Holy Spirit.

In summary, Paul understands the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham to be the conclusive event that seals the recovery of the human purpose. Through faith in Jesus, who became a curse for those under the curse, one is redeemed, adopted, indwelt, and can now begin to realize the harnessed ontological potential of the divine image and likeness. Stated differently, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, one can begin to become more like the person they will be in the resurrection, thus experience increasing liberation from the curse of the ground and its accompanying existential anguish. This statement will be proven in the following section.

### ***Symmorphos, Anakainoō, and Metamorphoō: Becoming Heavenly***

The NT repeatedly references Jesus as the image of God. It also states that Jesus, being the image of God, is the standard to which the believer is to conform to. What this means is the Holy Spirit enables one to progressively realize the divine image and likeness embedded within, the consummative point being full correspondence to the person of Jesus. As a person more accurately reflects Jesus, having access to the source of true life through the indwelling Holy Spirit, they then better represent God and truly relate to God.<sup>37</sup> Several key passages capture this phenomenon using three key words: *symmorphos*, *anakainoō*, and *metamorphoō*.

Romans 8:29 argues that believers will totally conform to the very image of God, Jesus the Son. Foundational to this conformity is the reality that Christians are no longer under condemnation. Instead, due to their union with Christ, the law of the Spirit of life (the indwelling Holy Spirit) indicates their confidence, not the law of sin and death

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<sup>37</sup> Marc Cortez, *ReSourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in the Light of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 109. Cortez defines the *image Dei* as the intention of “human persons to be the physical means through which [God] would manifest his own divine presence in the world.”

(8:1-2). The result of this union and indwelling is the shared resurrection between Jesus and believers (8:11). What Jesus experienced through resurrection, so will the Christian. This shared experience begins immediately and continues indefinitely. So then, presently, believers are “conformed” (*symmorphos*) into the image of Jesus (8:29). Jesus is the standard that believers are attaining to over time.<sup>38</sup> This is an ongoing experience for believers, even while they are in earthly bodies, and it will be completed in glory. This is proven in Paul’s ordering of salvation events: “predestined, called, justified, glorified” (8:30).<sup>39</sup> Until glory, humans will suffer and sin, and thus are rendered incapable of realizing the divine image’s full potential. Yet, as one’s union with Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit is more deeply embraced, believers are liberated from the curse of the law so they can re-capture the human experience that was lost in Adam’s disobedience. They do so with the person of Christ as the aim. This transformation will complete in glory, but in the meantime, Christians can begin to realize their ontological potential.

This same idea is affirmed in Colossians 3. Paul commands Christians to “put to death (3:5)” earthly practices, as well as the “old self (*anthrōpos*) with its practices (3:9).” In their place, Christians are to “put on the new self (3:10).” Since the Hebrew OT equivalent to *anthrōpos* is *’ādām*, it is proper to understand that Paul is calling for Christians to depart from one version of humanity into a new version of humanity.<sup>40</sup> The new version of humanity is “being renewed (*anakainoō*) in knowledge after the image of its creator (3:10).” Meaning, now that Christians have transitioned into this new humanity, they can continually renew themselves,<sup>41</sup> empowered by increase in

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<sup>38</sup> Because 1 Corinthians 15 says that the Christian will one day “bear the image of the man of heaven,” it is reasonable to conclude that the Christian is growing into the version of themselves that they will be in glory.

<sup>39</sup> Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny*, 239.

<sup>40</sup> Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny*, 239.

<sup>41</sup> This is what the verb *anakainoō* means. The stem *ana* means “again” or “repeat,” and

knowledge which corresponds with Jesus, who is the image of the new man’s creator.<sup>42</sup> Subsequently, the greater the knowledge one has of the standard, Jesus, the more that person abides in their new humanity, which is modeled after Jesus. This process is articulated again in 2 Corinthians 4:16, where Paul writes “though our outer *anthrōpos* is wasting away, our inner *anthrōpos* is being renewed (*anakainōō*) day by day.” Over time and despite mortality, the new humanity – our true self – emerges. Romans 12:2 describes how one achieves this: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (*metamorphōō*) by the renewing (*anakainōōsis*) of the mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Christians transform at a progressive rate as their minds are repeatedly reset.<sup>43</sup> Colossians 3 would add that one’s mind is reset by knowledge of the prototypical *anthrōpos*, Jesus. In so doing, the believer will depart from the former way of thinking (“this world,” Rom 12:2), and they settle into a new way to think, which ultimately leads to flourishing rather than despair (“good,” “acceptable,” “perfect,” Rom 12:2). This parallels nicely with Colossians’ “put off,” “put on” language (Col 3:9-10). As Christ, the model of ontological realization, is known, consequently one’s mind is renewed, thus sustaining residence in the new humanity. In that state, the human ontological potential is increasingly realized.

So far, the verbs *symmorphos*, “conform,” and *anakainōō*, “renew,” capture the spiritual progression from the old *anthrōpos* to the new *anthrōpos* until attainment of the

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*kainōō* means to “make new” or “innovate.” The verb is passive, so this repeated newness is happening to the believer as they increase in knowledge which accords to Jesus, the image of his (the new self) creator. Henry George Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), 392, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>42</sup> The “image” is Jesus, since elsewhere he is attested as the image of God (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 3:21). Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 191.

<sup>43</sup> Beale describes this as “progressive new-creational ‘transformation by the renewing’ of believers.” Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 256.



standard, which is the image of Jesus. A person's ontological potential will be increasingly realized as they continue along this trajectory. Said differently, the curse of the ground begins to lift as the believer gradually corresponds to the divine image and likeness perfectly expressed in Jesus. Now, a different verb will be employed to capture the same phenomenon: *metamorphoō*.

Humanity's progressive liberation from the curse and progressive realization of its ontology is traced in 2 Corinthians 3. The new covenant has been applied to the heart of the believer so that they are enabled to receive Paul's ministry (3:1-6; 14). The veil has been lifted from the heart of the believer (3:17), and the Spirit has inaugurated a "freedom" (3:17) from the letter that kills (3:6) and the "ministry of death" (3:7), so now the believer is "beholding the glory of the Lord" (3:18).<sup>44</sup> This says the same idea as Colossians 3, where the believer is to put off the old *anthrōpos* and put on the new *anthrōpos* by knowing the image of the new *anthrōpos*' creator (Col 3:10). Further, the spiritual result is similar; in Colossians 3 a "renewal" (*symmorphos*) oriented towards the image of Jesus takes place, and in 2 Corinthians 3:18, believers are "transformed" (*metamorphoō*, the *morphoō* root is shared) into the image of Christ one degree at a time.<sup>45</sup> The phenomenon Paul is describing is the reversal of what Adam had lost and the commencement of existential bliss due to increasingly realized ontological potential.

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<sup>44</sup> Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 179. Wright argues that the "freedom" here is the liberty that Paul feels to proclaim and defend the gospel openly and honestly. I think that is a sound implication of new covenant ministry, but more primarily the freedom that Paul is speaking to is the freedom from the law and the sin that is provoked by it (cf. 1 Cor 3:6) due to the Spirit's regenerative and transformative work. With the veil/hard hearts lifted, the believer can realize their ontological potential.

Additionally, to "behold the glory of the Lord" is the same idea as Colossians three's "knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:10).

<sup>45</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 265. Wright argues that the glory we behold is other Christians, and together we are attaining to the same image. Again, I think he is articulating an implication of the new birth rather than the primary result of it: access to God through Christ and conformity to the image of Christ (cf. Rom 8:29). Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 185-86.

## Conclusion

The relationship between the '*ādām*' and the '*ādāmāh*' demonstrates the state of humanity - both its existential bliss and despair. Once the '*ādāmāh*' is cursed, humanity will suffer difficulty in dominion and loss of divine fellowship. The divine image and likeness are destined to remain unfulfilled until the curse is removed. This causes Lamech to desire the curse of the ground to be lifted (Gen 5:29). In Genesis 12:1-3, Lamech's desires are met with a hint towards their fulfillment. Genesis 12:1-3 narrates the call of Abram, and in it, Moses' chosen words reveal the plan to eliminate the curse and the reverse the existential anguish which languishes humanity. 1 Corinthians 15 confirms the OT suggestion of reversal of the curse through resurrection. The believer completely conforms to the image of Jesus when they inherit their new resurrection body. This event seals existential bliss through realized ontological potential. When the glorified, spiritual body is inhabited, one is a product of heaven and earth, thereby possessing in and of themselves the necessary resources for immortal, indestructible life. Following this, Romans 8:18-23 reveals that creation itself, the cursed ground, will also experience relief when decomposed bodies rise from it. Since humans were never meant to return to dust, the ground is polluted with the dust of humans. And since humans exercise dominion over creation improperly, creation cannot attain its intended end. So then, the ground exists in a state of groaning, awaiting the resurrection so that it will be cleansed and so that creation can be ruled properly towards its intended end. But the realized human ontology of eternity is already breaking into the present due to Jesus' death. The cross is the decisive event that lifts the curse and fulfills the promise to Abraham that "all the families of the '*ādāmāh*' will be blessed" (Gen 12:3). Specifically, it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that commences the process of blessing. Thus, humanity is no longer destined to solely exist under the tyranny of the curse of the ground, for it has been lifted and will increasingly lift as one renews and transforms in relationship with Christ, in accordance with Christ, by the Spirit.

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## ABSTRACT

### FORMED FROM THE DUST OF THE GROUND: A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND THE GROUND IN GENESIS 1-12

David Joseph Nickerson, DMin  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert Plummer

This project traces the dynamic relationship between the man and the ground in Genesis 1-12 through the appearance of the *'ādām* - *'adāmāh* motif and its near associations. In so doing, I contend that there is a detectable movement of the human existential state, shifting from bliss to anguish. Consequently, later OT authors utilize the curse of the ground (Gen 3:17-19) as a framework for interpreting the suffering in life. Alternatively, later OT authors also anticipate the removal the curse of the ground, specifically through resurrection. Furthermore, the NT confirms these suspicions by connecting the resurrection of Jesus to the lifting of the curse and thus the end of human existential anguish. Yet, the lifting of the curse is already underway due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

## VITA

David Joseph Nickerson

### EDUCATION

BA, Liberty University, 2013

MDiv, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017

### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Associate Staff, Baptist Collegiate Ministries at United States Naval Academy,  
Annapolis, Maryland, 2013-2017

Pastoral Apprentice, Redemption Church, Arnold, Maryland, 2013-2016

Pastor of Preaching and Vision, Citizens Church, Annapolis, Maryland 2017-