THE CREATION ACCOUNT

An Alternate Look at Genesis 1-2

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Every year as we restart our reading cycle with Genesis, I wish we would have more time to spend on the first several chapters. We cover so much ground that I never feel we have sufficient time to ponder and study. Genesis 1-2 are our foundational references. This is the beginning, and yet I never give the effort to understanding in the way that I attempt with other sections of the Word. So, this year, I have decided to read slowly, ask my questions and delve into Scriptures like I have never before.

These thoughts are part of my journey, not my destination. Maybe some things are inaccurate. I'm sure some are. My goal is to continue to push myself to study and dig into Scriptures in order to cultivate a growing understanding of how to honor YHWH with my life.

Because I am attempting to study Scripture alone relating to creation, and not man's interpretation of it, I tried to stay away from commentaries. I am using word studies on the original languages to get a better grasp on the meanings. Additionally, I have not read any extra-biblical literature explaining the creation account. There may be some nuggets of truth in those sources, but I find it difficult to sift through all the extraneous information to find it. I really wanted to explore the Word of YHWH, that was confirmed by Yeshua the Messiah and little else. As such, there may be others who share similar ideas regarding creation and I am unaware of it. I am starting from my own learned perspective and working towards a better understanding that, hopefully, is more aligned with Scriptures.

As I began to read from Genesis 1, a flood of questions emerged.

- What is this "the beginning" of?
- What is the void, the darkness and the waters?
- Was evil present at creation?
- What is the significance of God hovering over the waters?
- Why did God have to create light if He is already light?
- Why did God create light one day and on a later day create the sun, moon and stars?
- Why did God even create mankind? Why create the earth at all?

I had generic answers to these questions, but when I really pushed myself, I realized I was not entirely satisfied with them. I am not even sure where these ideas originated, but I know that I hadn't evaluated Scripture to search for myself. Once I began to examine my views up against Scripture, even more questions emerged. Through this process of unpacking Scriptures, I now have a much larger view of our existence and YHWH's plan of salvation. The spiritual

battle has clarified and a greater eternal perspective immerged. This exercise has led to a deeper vision into the foundational goodness, righteousness and power of YHWH.

In the Beginning

> *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*
> *Genesis 1:1*

What was "beginning" in Genesis 1:1? Previously, I would have answered without even thinking; this verse described the creation of our physical earth, solar system and life, including humankind, on earth. Now I'm wondering if that is only partly true. Even if we assume that the use of "the heavens and the earth" is referring to what *would* be made as this narrative unfolds, whatever *was* there was "without form and void". I have always read that phrase to mean emptiness and nothingness just waiting for God to create something. But then I read on and it says there was darkness and there were waters. So, *something* was there.

If something was actually there, what was it? Where did it come from? Where do we get the idea that God created the world from nothing? And what does "without form and void" actually mean?

I could be wrong, but I couldn't find any Scriptural basis for the idea that God created our physical earth as we know it, as described in Genesis 1, from absolutely nothing. There *is*, however, evidence that God did create everything visible and invisible, physical and spiritual. So, it seems to reason, that at some point, only God existed in his universe, and then he began creating beings and worlds. He created the angelic beings, cherubim and seraphim and all the hosts of heaven.

> *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*
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> *Colossians 1:15-20*

What this Colossians passage, as well as others, doesn't say is that the creation of the physical earth on which we live was the first physical creation. It doesn't indicate whether it our Earth was created from nothing. We understand from Scripture that YHWH did create all things, physical and spiritual, and that without Him nothing would exist. But, whether or not *something* existed before the Genesis 1 creation narrative could change the entire perspective.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORD "CREATE"

If God created everything at some point and nothing exists apart from Him, then it stands to reason, that he created darkness and evil. But how can that be if God says he is light and there is no darkness found in Him. I realize that nighttime is darkness and is not inherently evil, but often "darkness" is symbolic of what is evil. In Isaiah 45:7, Scripture records that not only did God create light and darkness, but peace and calamity. Though Eastern thought values holding opposites in tension, and I can appreciate that, I decided to dig into the word, "created".

The word "create" is *bore* in Hebrew. According to Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, this word means to cut, carve out or form by cutting. It bears the connotation of breaking and separating. This is the word used to describe God creating the heavens, the earth and all living beings. My immediate thought traveled to Genesis 1:4a, "And God separated the light from the darkness." The idea that God created all our physical world from nothing doesn't seem to be supported by Scripture, but it seems like God created it all by separating and cutting back from what was present; darkness over the face of the deep waters.

This helps me understand the tension that is found in Scripture that a good, righteous God says he created "calamity" in Isaiah 45, and the "ravager to destroy" in Isaiah 54. In a sense, undoubtably, God formed and fashioned everything. Nothing has come into being without his express intent. In another sense, in creating, separating and cutting away what was "good" from a corrupted darkness already present, as in the first chapter of Genesis, by default leaves a residual evil and darkness. This is consistent with the creation account.

When God separates out the light, darkness remains. And the light is described as "good", in contrast to what was already present and also left over. When God separated out the waters and made "waters above" also called the "heavens" or "sky", he left waters that were already present. God then separated dry land out of the existing water, called "earth" and that was "good". It is no wonder that eastern culture connected fear and evil with bodies of water. There are other examples, too, of God creating our world that carry the sense of cutting away, forming by separating. Of course, an obvious one is the creation of man and woman, where YHWH cut out a part of Adam to create Eve.

Therefore, if God was creating what was good by separating from what was already present, *what was there*? Genesis 1:2 states "the earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep" (implying deep waters, which is explicitly stated later). I have spent years ignoring the nagging feeling to look deeper into this verse. How could there be deep waters or darkness before creation? We tend to think of all physical matter as created in Genesis as God spoke it, but here we see that these already existed at the point this narrative begins? Is this symbolic of a spiritual idea and not physical matter that was present? Or could it be both spiritual and physical?

The Hebrew word that is translated "without form" in English, is *tohu* in Hebrew, meaning wilderness, wasteland, desert, or vain, emptiness. So, the earth was a wasteland and "void". "Void" in Hebrew is the word *bohu*. meaning desolation or a physical state lacking order and in complete chaos. Though I have long known this verse and the words, the ramification of the presence of a dark watery wasteland in complete physical, and possible spiritual, chaos is vastly different than my prevailing creation imagery.

Interestingly, *bohu* is only used three times in all of the Tanak. Genesis 1:2 and Jeremiah 4:23 both discuss the creation of the heavens and the earth as we know them. The last reference is in Isaiah 34:11 and is used in combination with the words "measuring line" and "plumbline".

But the hawk and the porcupine shall possess it,
the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
He shall stretch the line of confusion over it,
and the plumb line of emptiness.

Isaiah 34:11

In this passage in Isaiah 34, we see God's future judgment on the all nations of the earth. Usually the terms "measuring line" and "plumbline" are used for building or construction terms. In fact, Scriptures use many combinations of terms for measuring tools, for the purpose of determining how people measure up. Isaiah 28:17 says that God will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plumbline, or more accurately "mason's level" or *misqalet.* This reference is to the Messiah, against whom all will be measured. This passage says that Jerusalem has made a covenant with death, and has taken refuge in deception and sheltered themselves with lies. God counters this by describing his salvation as a perfectly constructed building. He has laid the sure foundation in Zion and has a placed precious cornerstone by which the refuge of deception and secrecy will be destroyed.

I find it interesting that passages concerning the Day of YHWH often use the language of construction tools relating to God's justice and righteousness. In the instance of Isaiah 34, the same measurement terms are used in measuring evil, "confusion" or *tohu* and "emptiness" or *bohu*. Though *tohu* is used elsewhere, *bohu* is not, other than the Jeremiah passage describing creation mentioned above. This seems to imply that the earth being a "wasteland and chaos" or "without form and void" is, in fact, linked in some way to the evil that will be measured in the Day of YHWH. I think this indicates that there are spiritual implications to the usage of *tohu* and *bohu* in Genesis 1:2. It seems that evil was present before the creation of the heavens and earth as we know it today.

So, was this hollow wasteland of chaos merely a metaphorical evil that was present in YHWH's Kingdom, or was there something actually physically present before creation?

Often when I have thought of the creation account, I presumed that YHWH was King of the Universe and all was perfect. I believed that He desired to create something beautiful, desired companionship and wanted to dwell with mankind on earth. But when man chose to walk away from Him, YHWH then needed to solve the crisis. He provided salvation for mankind, through his righteous right hand of Yeshua, securing eternal life to those who repent and once again choose Him.

I'm wondering if this is not the whole story. I have just explained how it seems plausible that evil was present before the creation of our Earth. How did it get there and what are the implications of this?

Ezekiel 28:13-17 is an intriguing passage; a prophecy directed to Tyre. Clearly, the prophet is implying that Tyre is in alliance with evil, as the description of Satan is attributed to Tyre. But the interesting idea to note is, that at one point before the corruption of this cherub, he communed with YHWH.

You were in Eden, the garden of God;
every precious stone was your covering,
sardius, topaz, and diamond,
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle;
and crafted in gold were your settings
and your engravings.
On the day that you were created
they were prepared.
You were an anointed guardian cherub.
I placed you;
you were on the holy mountain of God;
in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.
You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created,
till unrighteousness was found in you.
In the abundance of your trade
you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned;
so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God,
and I destroyed you,
O guardian cherub,
from the midst of the stones of fire.
Your heart was proud because of your beauty;
you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground;
I exposed you before kings,
to feast their eyes on you.

Ezekiel 28:13-17

As stated before, the Ezekiel 28 passage seems to allude to the idea that there was a previous earth with a Garden and Mountain of YHWH. Cherubs were created and given charge over this earth. A guardian cherub, presumably the one who is now the Deceiver or Satan, was

perfectly righteous, beautiful and the highest authority. But at some point, he became prideful and unrighteousness entered him. YHWH threw him off the mountain to the ground, banishing him and thousands of beings that followed him. Destruction followed, rendering the garden and the earth "formless and void".

Some have suggested that this occurred after creation, and that Satan once was the guardian cherub over the Garden of Eden while Adam and Eve were living there. His banishment seems to have then been recorded in Genesis. God cursed him to slither in the dust on his belly, assuring that he would be hated, but the seed of man would eventually crush him. This is entirely plausible, we know that timelines in scriptural narratives are not always linear, but some things don't add up. In fact, Revelation 12, if read as chronological, seems to indicate that the woman gives birth to the twelve tribes before Satan and his followers are thrown from heaven.

It is a possibility that the Garden and Mountain of God are actually the same ones created in the account of Genesis 1 after the beginning of this Earth. It is possible that communing of YHWH and the cherub on the Mountain of God among the stones of fire occurred after this creation. The Garden and the Mountain of God are foundational themes in our understanding of YHWH and the Earth we live in. I like to think they are unique to *our* story and *our* relationship with YHWH, that they are so significant that YHWH would only have ever created such a place once. My issue with this idea is that we are still left with a question of the chaotic wasteland and darkness covering the deep water at the beginning of the creation account.

At the same time, YHWH seems to write a cyclical story. Themes in Scripture repeat, over and over, gathering momentum. These themes culminate in the utter destruction of evil, and eternal life for his people, glorifying YWHW for his righteousness and holiness. Is it really out of the realm of possibility that YHWH create an earth with the Garden of Eden and the Mountain of God, only to have it corrupted by evil and turn to a desolate wasteland…and then work out a plan to separate out a remnant of "good" to save the whole Kingdom for eternity? Because in fact that very thing did happen in Genesis 1. Only I'm wondering if this, like so much else, is merely a shadow or echo, of what is happening in the whole Kingdom. And in fact, Genesis 1 is not the last time we see this theme redeveloped in Scripture. The same words and phrases alluding to the creation account are used all throughout Scriptures until eternity is finally realized. From the Noah account, the deliverance from Egypt, Yeshua ushering in of the Kingdom, to YHWH's people becoming new creations and communing with Him for eternity, we see the themes of deliverance gathering momentum.

We tend to view creation as the point of perfection that is slowly, or rapidly, headed toward chaos. But what if we have it backwards? What if creation is the point in which YHWH's plan of salvation is initiated and restoration from the chaos of evil begins. Yes, things on earth, as we are told in Scripture, will significantly spiritually decline in the final days. BUT, the plan of salvation is gaining momentum! We are, in fact, nearer now to eternal life with YWHW in a Kingdom completely purged of evil than we were in the Garden of Eden.

A Short Detour: Shadows of the Kingdom

I'd like to go on a little tangent. Though this discussion is primarily on creation of our Earth, I want to take a quick look at what came before. We often comment that the Tabernacle, among other things, is a shadow of The Kingdom of YHWH. He gives us little glimpses of Himself and the way His Kingdom works, and hopefully we see part of what it will be like to worship Him throughout eternity. When studying the accounts of the fall of Satan, the guardian cherub, I found one of these glimpses and it is absolutely fascinating.

In Ezekiel 28 starting at verse 13, the passage describes Eden, the Garden of God. On the holy mountain of God were stone of fire. In that place YHWH created a special cherub, a heavenly being full of wisdom and perfectly beautiful. YHWH also prepared for this cherub a unique covering, gold with inlaid precious stones. Nine stones; sardius, topaz and diamond; beryl, onyx and jasper; and sapphire, emerald and carbuncle. The cherub was covered by this special adornment; he was anointed and appointed guardian and then ministers within the stones of fire on the Mountain of God.

I have never let that sink in before, but this definitely sounds like something else we know well. The Tabernacle! Could it be that we have a glimpse here in Ezekiel of the original Mountain of God, of the anointed high priest and his communion with the King of the Universe? Could it be that the tabernacle is the shadow on Earth of this very thing? That the ephod is a reflection of this covering the cherub wore as he communed with YHWH?

Let's look at this in context of our creation account. Imagine the scenario where Satan's fall happened before the re-creation of this Earth. Hypothetically, YHWH may have created his Kingdom as a spiritual realm, created all the heavenly hosts, and created a physical earth with a Garden and a Mountain. Ezekiel 28:14 says of Satan, "You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked."

If this cherub was the first being to fall, why did God need a "guardian" cherub? What was there to guard from if evil had not yet corrupted the Earth? I did a quick study of the word "guardian" and found it quite different than expected. The word in Hebrew is *sokek,* meaning to protect by being a barrier. Most uses of this word are connected to the ark of the covenant, which is incidentally in the holy of holies in the Tabernacle. For example, in Exodus 25 the cherubim would *overshadow* the ark with their wings, and in Exodus 40 the ark was *screened* by a veil. Other instances, such as in Psalm 5:11, Psalm 140:7, Lamentations 3:44, this word refers to YHWH covering or wrapping something or someone. A "guardian cherub" might be better referred to as a "covering cherub", possibly connected to the fact that he was placed on the mountain of YHWH where the stones of fire burned. Maybe the ark of the covenant, the place where YHWH put His Spirit, between the wings of the cherubim is another shadow of the original Mountain of YHWH.

This beautiful, blameless, heavenly creature covered and protected the stones of fire and Mountain of YHWH as he communed with YHWH…until unrighteousness entered him, according to Ezekiel 28:15. In verse 17, the cherub, now no longer anointed, is cast from the

Mountain and from the midst of the stones of fire, cast to the ground and destroyed. Scripture says he was made "common" or "profane", no longer set apart for special use. Revelation 12:9 states that when Satan was thrown down, his angels were thrown down with him.

I wonder if this fall to the ground resulted in a destroyed wasteland of the physical earth and the presence of spiritual darkness? It is a possibility that the ex-cherub was banished to some other location. Then after creation of Earth he traveled to the Garden of Eden and corrupted this creation as well.

Another possibility, though, is that when the anointed guardian cherub corrupted himself and was thrown from the Mountain of YHWH, the presence of YHWH withdrew from the earth, the Garden, and the Mountain. The fallen cherub was given what was left of the earth once YHWH withdrew. In Ezekiel 23:17 it explains that he was "thrown to the *ground*". That word is the same word used in Genesis 1:1 for "earth". It is alluded to in various passages in Revelation that Satan was given reign over the earth. In the Matthew, Satan himself tells Yeshua that he has complete power over every visible thing.

And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, **6** *and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.*
Luke 4:5-6

So, it is plausible to think that he could have been given rule over the earth before "creation". His darkness then began to corrupt whatever goodness YHWH had originally created in the garden and on the mountain until the earth became and empty wasteland of darkness.

THE FACE-OFF

This is the point that I believe the creation of our Earth may have begun, as recorded in Genesis. And this is where it gets really interesting, at least for me. I'm going to rephrase Genesis with a plausible recounting of creation with this alternate understanding.

> *In the beginning, the earth was not as we know it today. Darkness and evil already existed since the uprising of angels in YHWH's Kingdom. The corrupted cherub responsible for this was banished from YHWH's presence, and the host of fallen angels went with him. The earth, where they were given temporary reign, had been thrown into chaos destroying the beauty that had once been the place where YHWH communed. Earth had become a desolate wasteland, covered in deep waters, and darkness was over the face of deep.*
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> *Then YHWH enters, trembles and hovers over the face of this deep. Darkness was over the deep and YHWH is over the deep. Face to face; the banished cherub and YHWH himself. Good versus Evil.*

This moment is the beginning of the redemption and restoration of the Kingdom. YHWH descends to the wasteland and dark waters to meet face to face with Satan. He hovers over the face of the darkness and begins to take back what belongs to Him. YHWH speaks out and calls back the light out of the darkness. Long before man was created, long before Eve and Adam sinned, YHWH had a plan of salvation for His kingdom. This redemption story is bigger than man, though we will see how man plays a very significant role. Salvation (Yeshua) was not an afterthought for a fallen creation, but he was the plan for life all along, from the very beginning.

John 1:1-4 echoes this perfectly.

> *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
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> *John 1:1-4*

As each "day" of creation unfolds, YHWH is waging war with the fallen cherub. He separates, sets apart, creates boundaries, cutting out a remnant of "good" from the desolate darkness. YHWH isn't creating Earth from nothing in this case. (Though we could, and did at some point in eternity past.) He is taking his Kingdom back from what was temporarily given to Satan to rule for a time.

YHWH first began to redeem the earth. At this moment, He didn't just speak into an absence of matter and create Earth. Out of the existing darkness He drew light. He separated the waters of darkness and gave boundaries, creating the sky above. He gathered the waters, collecting the chaos and made dry land in the midst of it. And all of that was "good". YHWH had to explain this because it contrasts directly with the darkness and evil that already existed. Though it would have still been incredible that the Creator could create this Earth perfect and beautiful from nothing, it is infinitely more powerful that He created this "good" Earth from that which had been corrupted with darkness. And it seems that this is what YHWH did. From an utter wasteland of darkness and deep waters, YHWH spoke and separated the light from the darkness and it was good. Even more, YHWH placed new life, creatures with his own breath in them, in every corner of this earth. He created life in the darkest oceans, that dark water, and said it was "good". The moment YHWH spoke, "let there be light", the darkness was shattered. Satan's demise was initiated, activating the plan of salvation of the Kingdom

WHY THIS VIEW OF CREATION MATTERS:

Thoughts on YHWH, Humankind and Yeshua

Why does our origin story matter so much? Why is it important for me to acknowledge that my previous view of creation may be incomplete? For me, it isn't just a few minor details about an account thousands of years ago. It is the foundation. This new perspective shifts my entire understanding of the purpose of mankind, the Kingdom of YHWH, the plan of salvation, and YHWH Himself. I am seeing a much clearer eternal perspective, one that answers more of my questions, one that resonates throughout Scripture.

Humans are quite self-centered. It stands to reason that we would have a human-centric creation narrative. I grew up with the idea that YHWH wanted companionship and created humans to love Him and walk with Him in The Garden, so He created Earth and all the life upon it. Somehow, I thought YHWH was blindsided when his creation began to descend into evil and chaos, and He had to initiate a plan to redeem his people. Now I'm rethinking this.

I wonder if creation of this Earth is YHWH's response to the presence of the fallen cherub, Satan, within His Kingdom. Even though he was banished to earth he still existed and had a realm of authority. Through creation of our Earth, separation of good from the evil, God created man in his image. For the first time, He created "children" of his own, made in His own image, living beings to have dominion and subdue the wasteland of darkness. In fact, YHWH formed them out of the dust. It is ironic and extraordinary that from the ground under Satan's feet YHWH would raise up children, to be his people, who would be the eventual and final destruction of Satan and his fallen kingdom.

Humans, as YHWH always knew, were easily deceived and corruptible. Satan, in his arrogance, pulls the uncorrupted humans away from YHWH deceiving them and enslaving them in darkness. But God had a plan to redeem His Kingdom, through His own power. There is great justice in the knowledge that, though for a moment, Satan may think he has overcome, that his dark rule is no match for YHWH. In the end, the rising from the dirt, the life breathed into dust, dry bones becoming flesh, evil is and will finally be conquered through the very enslaved race that Satan thought was his.

> *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*
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> *Romans 8:19-23*

Creation in Genesis 1 and 2 wasn't just about creating mankind to be with God for fellowship, but for carrying out the plan to defeat the corruption in the entire Kingdom. The creation of Earth and the human race is the final endgame for the Satan and eternal destruction of evil. Creation itself, the Earth that was enslaved by Satan, longs to be set free from bondage and corruption. The hope and the promise that the Earth itself will obtain freedom is evident in the fact that the YHWH has given the firstfruit of His Spirit to his children.

Understanding the creation account in Genesis 1, not as merely the beginning of matter, but as the initiation of the plan of salvation for the Kingdom, helps me appreciate YHWH more. There was always a nagging feeling that an all-knowing God who exists outside of time should be able to predict that man would choose evil over walking with Him. Why would God choose to create our Earth, our human race, just to be enslaved by sin? Either he did it on purpose, in which case He would seem like a sadistic god, or he did it accidentally. In that case, he would not be nearly as wise as I have believed.

Of course, this is the repeated theme we see at the end of Genesis when the Israelites are told by God to go to Egypt during the famine. He sent them, either unknowingly or purposefully. Looking back on the events, from our vantage point we can see that YHWH knew they would be enslaved and He knew He would again draw them out. YHWH promised Israel this before he leaves for Egypt. As I wrestled with a good God that would knowingly set up His people to be enslaved, I realized something. Enslaving the Israelites in Egypt was not merely setting them up so He would *have to* save them from slavery. He did do that, but that was only the method he used for a much bigger plan. He was using his people to save all of humankind. Their story was the path of salvation, so all nations and all people would see the greatness of YHWH and worship Him.

Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them."

Exodus 7:4-5

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. For this time, I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose, I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

Exodus 9:13-16

This is actually the very place I began my creation study, because the same nagging irritation with idea that the God would have his people enslaved in Egypt, brought me back to

Genesis 1. Why would God put a people on this Earth that He knew would become enslaved to sin? When I reached my "aha-moment" regarding the Egypt narrative, I used the same reasoning in approaching Genesis 1.

YHWH did not, either foolishly or with evil intent, create humans on the Earth to watch them become enslaved to sin, only to create a grand plan to save them. He did do this, but I think it is more than this. I think the plan was significantly more far-reaching. God desired to redeem the entire Kingdom from the evil of Satan. So, YHWH created His children to inhabit the Earth that was presently under the reign of evil. He *knew* they would be susceptible to the deception of the enemy, because that is how they were created. It was not a flaw, but by divine design, because YHWH desired to work his power through mankind. For a moment, Satan would think that he has the upper hand, that humans are a weak race that can be enslaved for his Kingdom. But YHWH also knew that a remnant, just a small number, would make a choice, in spite of their weakness, to serve Him. Through this remnant a fully-human, fully-God Savior would be born to bring the Kingdom to this Earth, and initiate the final destruction of Satan and his kingdom. This was his plan all along.

YHWH is a good and powerful God; not a fool, or a manipulating being with evil intent. I never wanted to believe that, but with my previous creation view I found it difficult to rationalize the tension I felt. He is all-knowing, but more than that He sees and acts. The plan of salvation to redeem humankind is not just to bring His people back to Himself. On a Kingdom-level, this plan was a set-up to finally rid eternity of Satan's corruption.

I also am beginning to change my perspective on the purpose of humankind and inherent evil. We were not just created to commune with YHWH and live well on the Earth. From day one, actually Day 6, we were created to be an integral part of the plan to dominate and destroy the Evil One. Genesis 1:28 says that the human purpose is to multiply, fill the Earth and subdue and dominate it. I really don't think this just means to domesticate the animals and build cities. I think this speaks of the larger plan to redeem the corrupted Earth for Himself and rid the Kingdom of Satan.

That impacts my entire view of myself. We, who have been "born into sin through Adam", are not a mistake! We are the plan. YHWH knew we would be vulnerable and fragile. He knew we would be enslaved. He wanted it that way so Satan would believe he has the upper hand. But actually, YHWH plans to work through our weakness and crush the enemy's head. It was the plan from the beginning.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Genesis 3:15

Paul writes to the Corinthians, that YHWH allowed Satan to harass him, so that YHWH's power may be perfected or completed in him. Through weak, inadequate, delinquent, miserable sinners, YHWH will show his power and glory. And not only that, but try as he might Satan is unable to destroy what YHWH has built.

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

We live today with a Christian teaching that all humans are born inherently evil. From the moment they are conceived they are already corrupted and sinful. Entire parenting curriculum are focused around this "truth". I'm not entirely sure about this. I think that young minds are quickly molded and shaped by our sinful environments and other humans with sinful hearts. And Genesis does explain that since Adam and Eve from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the human race now has this understanding. We also understand that a curse of physical death was put over all humanity as a consequence for any sin, no matter how small. That is not the same as being born a sinner. So, the reality is, and what we see echoed in Scripture, there never was or is anyone on Earth without sin, other than Yeshua. That doesn't mean that newborn infants are born filled with evil hearts, but that eventually, and usually within the first several years, every human will be enslaved by Satan. We cannot resist it on our own. And in the sense that all mankind will die, we are filled with death, the effect of sin, from birth. I believe we are born as God's children, just as God intended, and most walk away from Him.

This matters to me because YHWH didn't create us sinful, and enslaved, doomed from the start. He did create us very weak and easily deceived…but, for a purpose. Creating us with the inability to evade sin is not a mistake! It is the opportunity for humans reflect the eternal theme of YHWH; in our weakness *He* is strong. We absolutely cannot engage in battle with the enemy and expect to be victorious, unless YHWH's power is at work in us. We then become an invisible threat Satan doesn't see coming. Satan eventually will be eternally defeated by a small remanent of the weakest creations in the Kingdom, commanded by Yeshua Himself. Yeshua will gather his army of redeemed weaklings, and to Satan's dismay, YHWH's power and glory will be revealed through us.

Our weak humanity also matters because we don't just live in that redeemed endgame, but in our present age. Day to day we have to wage war with the Evil One, who is crouching at our door waiting to devour. Job is an amazing book that really spells out the authority Satan has on Earth and the desire he has to corrupt and enslave humans. The dialogue reveals YHWH's ability to show his power in human weakness, thwarting all efforts of Satan.

My point is, there is a Kingdom-wide war and we have a created purpose. Humans were not placed on this Earth as perfect ornaments in YHWH's unadulterated Garden. We were created with the breath of YHWH to take over and redeem this corrupted Earth, foiling the plans of Satan at every turn, until all evil and death is destroyed and the New Heaven and New Earth is realized. Our proclivity to sin isn't a mistake in the plan but the way in which the plan is carried

out. Not that we *should* sin, but in spite of our inability to resist on our own, through YHWH He will be victorious, in us and in the whole Kingdom. And the irony is that YHWH is doing this right under Satan's nose, in his own backyard. In the end, through the weakest of creation will the infinite glory and power of YHWH be revealed. The battle is against Satan and the kingdom of darkness and in the end every knee will bow to YHWH.

> *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,*
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> *Ephesians 6:10-18*

Last, I want to talk about Yeshua because he plays a significant role in the plan of salvation. Of course, his name means "YHWH is salvation". I used to think, Yeshua came to Earth as a baby, to become the sinless Sacrifice for all the transgressions of the human race and to secure eternal life for us by destroying death that enslaves us. While that is true, I'm wondering if that might not be the entire picture.

We are told in John 1 that Yeshua was present at the creation of Earth and that all things were made by Him. We are told that all life came through Yeshua and this light cannot be overcome by the darkness. If Yeshua was present from the beginning what was his purpose? My prior understanding was that sinned entered the world when Adam and Eve were deceived and sinned. Why would "YHWH's salvation" even be necessary at the beginning if man had not yet sinned? I think that it is because, though sin had not corrupted humans, sin was very present on the Earth. Sin had made YHWH's earth unrecognizable, a chaotic, desolate wasteland, as stated in Genesis 1:1. When YHWH sets man in the garden of Eden, he tells them not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. So clearly there was evil about which to have knowledge. This echoes my new thinking that Yeshua did not come to Earth just to extend YHWH's salvation to humankind, but Yeshua was the plan for the redemption of the Kingdom even before creation.

Yeshua's good news that he proclaimed was not just that sinners can be saved by grace, but the Kingdom of Heaven is come! That can mean so many things. I wonder if one facet is referring to the idea that, though Satan's kingdom currently has dominion over the Earth, Yeshua came to prove that YHWH was still working out the redemption of the entire Kingdom. Satan

had enslaved all humans in sin, which we are told is punishable by death. In a sense Satan is scheming to lead as many of God's children as he can to death, enlarging his own kingdom of death and darkness. But YHWH sent Yeshua, as a man, to give Himself over to Satan to pay the penalty of death. Since he was not only a man but, in fact, YHWH Himself, he defeating death for the entire Kingdom. The true Children of YHWH cannot be not enslaved any longer and the Kingdom of YHWH is now being realized on Earth. The next phase of the plan to lure Satan to his ultimate destruction, has begun. In the end, once all evil has been conquered, Yeshua will hand the Kingdom back to YHWH, where he will dwell with his children forever.

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:24-26

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

Revelation 21:1-3

There is so much about Yeshua, and the power of the Spirit, that I want to work through, because I know that my perspective on creation will impact the larger scope of his life, death and resurrection. For my purposes here, I just want emphasize that it seems from scripture that Yeshua was present at creation and in fact everything was created through Him. All of creation as we know it was created through the Salvation of YHWH. So, salvation of man wasn't an afterthought. It wasn't just the solution for a terrible human race that rebelled. I think, salvation, through Yeshua, was actually the plan from the beginning, and the entire point of creation.

To sum up what I've learned from Genesis 1-2, the creation account needs to be viewed in a God-centric, as opposed to a human-centric, view. Humans may not be not the reason for our created world. The Kingdom of YHWH was initially corrupted by an anointed cherub whose pride caused him to fill himself with unrighteousness. He was thrown off the mountain of God with all the other angels who followed him where he was given temporary authority over earth. This earth was full of darkness, chaos and everything that opposes the Kingdom of YHWH. Genesis 1:1 wasn't just the beginning of human life and creation of Earth; it was the beginning of the of the redemption of the entire Kingdom of YHWH!