

Passover And New Creation

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Given 25-Mar-17; Sermon #1369A

Have you ever noticed how many pairs appear in Genesis 1 and 2? Not the pears you eat; those were apples, were they not? No, I mean twosomes—that kind of pairs. Not just one tree, but a second tree. Not only a tree of the knowledge of good, but of evil also. Not just image, but likeness as well. Not just *tohu*, but *bohu* too. Trees in the Garden were not only “pleasant to the sight” but also “good for food.” Not only was Adam to keep the Garden, he was to dress it.

Some pairings are just that, pairings, while others come in the form of binary opposites or dichotomies, like heaven and earth, day and night, light and dark, sun and moon, land and sea, male and female, good and evil, life and death.

Those are explicit, while others, like subject and object, in Genesis 1:1, or like appearance and reality or presence and absence are more subtle, implicit. But, they are there all the same. Lots and lots of pairs.

The existence of these and other pairings give us more than a subtle hint of a basic principle God put to work in creating the order of things around us. As we will see, that is a principle of division or separation.

As we approach Passover, it may be worthwhile to consider God’s *new* creation, which starts with His creation of the new man, of whom Christ is the First fruits—the first and preeminent, and which will culminate with His building a new heaven and a new earth. Not division, but unity is the defining characteristic of this new creation, an environment of fellowship and of peace, as God unravels the divisions of the first order of things.

As members of God’s new creation now, the unity God is building should, in fact, it must, deeply affect our thinking and actions.

Let us dig in by asking: What was the approach, or maybe better, the basic principle, God used when He created *this* order of things? We do not have to read far in the Genesis account to find the answer.

Genesis 1:3-5: (ESV) And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And

there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

God created this pairing, named it, and defined it as good. It predates the introduction of sin into the Garden. As part of the fabric of life He was in the process of creating, God realized that this pairing was good and necessary. Indeed, we use this pairing to tell us when the Sabbath starts and ends. And, since it is basic to the definition of the period of time we call a day, this pairing gives definition to the Sabbath, a recurring seven-day period of time. God created this pairing for our good. We use it all the time. Everyone under the sun does so.

I need to interrupt myself to do some 'level setting'. Please, do not mistake me. These pairings are not the dualisms created by Gnostics. I have purposely avoided the term 'dualism' because, strictly, it refers to false ideas advanced by Gnostics about the flesh and the spirit. The Gnostics do use the pairings I have mentioned, and will mention, to create their grisly perversions and their subtle counterfeits of God's truth. That is not what we will talking about. And, let me be plain about this as well: I am not talking about the 'kosmos.' Not that order.

Satan, with the help of deceived mankind, built that system once sin entered the picture, built the governmental, military, economic, educational, and religious systems we endure to this day.

Rather, I am speaking, most specifically about the more primal, more basic order, about those good pairings *God* created either during Creation week or, in other cases, a bit later, as part of the out-working of His plan. Examples include the Jew/Gentile pairing and the scattering/gathering dichotomies I will mention later on.

Let us go back to the day/night pairing. What is most remarkable about that pairing is that it came about through a '*division* process.' God *separated* or *divided* the light from the dark. As a generalization, it is fair to say that God built the order in which we live today—the order defined in Genesis 1 and 2—through processes of separation or division. Indeed, division, as cell division, is absolutely essential to life as we know it here. Under the sun, that is how we grow, through the process of division.

In point of fact, the Hebrew verb for 'divide' or 'separate' appears no less than five times in Genesis 1. Let us take a minute to review some of the other separations which take place in the creation accounts:

Genesis 1:6 On the second day, God created “an expanse [firmament] in

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the midst of the waters” He said, “let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse.”

Again, on the second day, there is an implied separation of land and sea. I will quote verse 9 from The Message, which is, admittedly, a forced, overly-stylized paraphrase:

Genesis 1:9 (MSG) “God spoke: “Separate! Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place; Land, appear!”

Genesis 1:14 On the fourth day, God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night.”

God elaborates on this fourth day separation in verses 17 and 18:

Genesis 1:17-18 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.”

This passage contains the implicit separation of humankind into male/female genders.

Genesis 1:27 (NKJV) So God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

The separation is more explicit in Genesis 2 where God created Eve from a rib He took, that is, excised, separated, from Adam. There was a more-than-symbolic division here.

Genesis 2:21-22 (KJV) And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Turn please to Ephesians 1. Here, the thrust turns from separation to gathering, to unification, a reversal of the division process. Verse 9 places us near the end of a long

sentence.

Ephesians 1:9-10 God has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth.

“All things” is neuter, carrying the idea of everything, not just people, but the entire creation. The verb behind the word *unit* carries the idea of *restoration* of a unity which has been lost. Christ is going to regather to Himself, or reconcile (hold on to that word), everything that has been separated.

Let us turn all the way to Revelation 21, where we will see more of this unification.

Revelation 21:1 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.

God is creating a new order of things, replacing what He built in Genesis 1 and 2.

The sea is gone. God dissolves the land/sea pairing He created at Genesis 1:10 by removing one member; He dries up the sea. We are not told how this will happen, but it definitely will happen. This is a symbolic process of unification. All is land now. If you will forgive the pun, this represents a sea change, that is, a major change in the order of things. If the sea were to go away today, its absence would present huge difficulties; I doubt if life would be possible on the earth. God's new order reverses the pairing of land and sea, and does so without destroying life.

Let us drop down to the end of verse 25 to see a second example of a dissolved pairing, the ending of a binary opposite:

Revelation 21:25 . . . and there will be no night there.”

Scratch another pairing, this one created at Genesis 1:3-5, that of day and night which we discussed earlier. In the new order of things, there will be no night. We get more information two verses up.

Revelation 21:23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for

the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

We will come back to talk about the sun later, when we talk about the end of another fundamental pairing: Over-the-sun and under-the sun.

We are ready for a generalization: Separation (or, if you prefer a more accurate term, bifurcation) is part and parcel of God's creation of *this* order of things. But, in the order of things to come, the new heaven and new earth, at least some—and I suspect all—of the separations will be reversed. The order of the day then will be unification, not division. But, when will that day come? That is a question which we, as we stand at the threshold of another Passover, should ask—and answer. When will that new creation come?

Please, turn to Galatians 3. Paul here lists three pairings, and then makes an important statement about unity. Please, catch the verb tenses:

Galatians 3:27-28 (PHILLIPS) All of you who were baptized “into” Christ have put on the family likeness of Christ. Gone is the distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female—you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Now, turn to Colossians 3. Did you notice: The distinction is gone. Not future. It was already history when Paul wrote these words. Paul makes a similar statement at: Colossians 3:10-11 (*Good News Translation*), breaking into verse 10:

Colossians 3:10-11 (GNT) This is the new being [that is, new man] which God, its Creator, is constantly renewing in His Own image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of Himself. As a result, there is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, and free, but Christ is all, Christ is in all.

You cannot miss the verb tenses. “There *is* no longer any distinction.” The point the apostle makes in both passages is that the old pairings listed therein *no longer exist*—at least for some people. Who is that? It is those who have “clothed themselves with Christ,” in Galatians 3:27, as *The Amplified Bible* renders.

In Colossians 3:10, Paul also uses the clothing metaphor, addressing himself to those who have “put on the new man.” That is his audience. Not John Doe on the street. Paul

understands that the distinctions between Jew and Gentile, male and female, etc., *still* exist in the physical order of things of Genesis. But, for those who have, as Paul puts in in,

Colossians 3:2 “set [their] minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth”

That is, for Christians oriented over-the-sun rather than under it, these pairings are no longer spiritually valid. The implication is that these pairing will completely fail when the physical melts away, at the time God creates the new heaven and the new earth.

To get a fuller picture of all this unification process, this reversal of divisions that God had built earlier, let us focus on the Jew/Gentile pairing, which pairing Paul placed at the head of *both* his lists of pairs in Colossians 3 and Galatians 3. By the early 50s AD, when the Jerusalem Council probably took place, the apostles had begun to grasp Christ’s comment to Peter about ten years earlier:

Acts 10:15 (WEB) “What God has cleansed, you must not call unclean.”

Peter finally figured out that God meant He had cleansed Gentiles—not worms. (He never did eat any of those.) God no longer considered the Gentiles unclean. So it was that Peter could say to the convened Council:

Acts 15:8-9 (TLB) God, who knows men’s hearts, confirmed the fact that He accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He gave Him to us [the Jewish Christians]. He made no distinction between them and us, for He cleansed their lives through faith, just as He did ours.

Notice the past tense of the verbs *made* and *cleansed*. The dissolution of the Jew/Gentile pairing was a done deal by that time of Acts 15.

Now, please turn over to Ephesians 2 where Paul expounds on the means God used to reconcile the evidently irreconcilable, the Jew/Gentile pairing. Then, as now, this was a major social division. Paul even uses the word *dividing* in this passage, as if in a reference to the concept of separation or division. Paul is addressing Gentiles here, having reminded them in verse 8 that they are saved by grace through faith. He continues in verse 12, reminding them that:

Ephesians 2:12-14 (DLNT) “You [Gentiles] were at that time without Christ, having been excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you, the ones formerly being far-away, were made [past tense] near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace. . .”

Wow, is that statement a clue: Christ's sacrifice was a type of peace offering, restoring fellowship between God and man and man and man, whether Jew or Gentile. In Greek, the word *peace* appears three times in this passage. We will pick it up in verse 14:

Ephesians 2:14-18 (DLNT) For He Himself is our peace, the One having made both one and having broken-down the dividing-wall of partition, the hostility—in His flesh having abolished the Law of commandments in decrees—in order that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace, and reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility by it. And having come, He announced-as-good-news peace to you, the ones far-away, and peace to the ones near [the Jews], because through Him we both have the access in one Spirit to the Father.

I tried to stress the concepts of unity and peace which permeate this scripture, and especially the idea of two becoming one in Christ. Through Christ's faithful obedience of His Father, the two members of the Jew/Gentile pairing actually become one. By analogy, this is like the sea drying up, leaving only the singularity of the land. This amalgamation is spiritual. We know that. Outside the faith of God, the Jew/Gentile pairing still exists; the opposites remain just that, a very real distinction to those oriented under-the-sun. Consider, for example, the current plan to install a wall between Mexico and the United States, in fact a wall between Gentile Mexico and Israelitish America.

That term “broken down the dividing-wall of partition” is definitive as a picture of God's method of removing the Jew/Gentile distinction, this separation. Paul is referring to the wall about the Temple, beyond which the Gentiles were not permitted. The verb, “broken down” is actually translated *melt* in II Peter 3 referring to the elements melting with fervent heat.

II Peter 3:10 (ESV) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will

be exposed.

Peter uses the same Greek verb two more times in the next two verses.

II Peter 3:11-12 (ESV) Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

Three times he uses that verb in those three verses, 10, 11, and 12, and in 11 and 12, in the *King James Version* where it is translated *dissolve*: "The heavens being on fire shall dissolve."

God broke down that dividing wall by dissolving it. He did not just knock it down, leaving rubble for other people to rebuild it. He utterly destroyed it, demolishing it with the same ardor He will display when He creates a new heaven and a new earth. That is how thoroughly God smashed the Jew/Gentile pairing. If the wall exists at all, it is as a figment of the imagination or thoughts of some carnal Christians, strongholds to be cast down.

II Corinthians 10:4-6 (AMP) The weapons of our warfare are not physical (weapons of flesh and blood). Our weapons are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. *We are* destroying sophisticated arguments and every exalted *and* proud thing that sets itself up against the (true) knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought *and* purpose captive to the obedience of Christ, being ready to punish every act of disobedience, when your own obedience (as a church) is complete.

Just as with the destruction of the sea and of the night which we spoke of before, we are left with a unity, or again, a singularity. So it is that the apostle concludes his comments.

Ephesians 2:22 (GNT) "In union with Him you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through His Spirit."

The 'Him' in this verse is Christ, while the 'you too' refers to Gentiles, and 'all the others'

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refers to Jews. The location mentioned therein is a definite singular: 'A' place.

In Ephesians 1, at the end of chapter 1, points out that that place, that place of peace, is Christ's body, His church.

Ephesians 1:22-23 (ESV) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

It is a singularity, a unity created by God. Christ's is a work of gathering into one.

I Corinthians 12:25 (MEV) "that there should be no division (schism) in the body."

In Matthew 12, He makes it clear that that is our work too:

Matthew 12:30 (ESV) "Anyone who does not help Me gather is really scattering."

Scattering is another word or action which equals 'dividing.'

Please turn to II Corinthians 5. Aside from *dissolve*, another verb which well describes God's method of destroying pairings, is *reconcile*. You might recall that Paul used the verb reconcile in the Ephesians 2 passage I read earlier. Christ's work is one of reconciliation.

II Corinthians 5:16 (ESV) From now on [not some time in the future, but beginning at the time of Paul], therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer.

The apostles are looking at Christ, and other people, from a spiritual perspective—over the sun. It is as if they are over the sun with God, looking down, sharing His perspective, like God sees them. They are seeing people differently, not in terms of the old pairings, the old distinctions, the old divisions, but in terms of people's *potential* to become members of the God Family.

Isaiah 46 tells us that God can see those things not yet done.

Isaiah 46:10 (ESV) declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

We, acting in faith on the revelation He has given us, can—and should—share God's perspective on people and events. Seeing them like God sees them.

II Corinthians 5:17-19 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.

Please, turn again to Revelation 21. This time we will start at verse 5, which tells us something else about the new heaven and earth.

Revelation 21:5 (ESV) "And He who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

In Greek, the verb 'am making' is in the present tense, denoting 'action taking place or going on in the present time.' This is another passage which points out that the creation of the new heaven and earth has already started. God has *already* constructed the environment of peace and unity, established fellowship between Him and us. He will continue building on that foundation, building His new creation until it is finished, breaking down one wall of division after another, until all is reconciled, all is united, in peace.

While we are here in Revelation 21, let us consider some prepositions. Originally, God created the heavens and the earth (a basic pairing in Genesis 1:1), the sun betwixt them. He thereby set up the over-the-sun and under-the sun pairing. But, what happens when the City of God—and God with it—moves under the sun? Well, the concept of over and under changes a lot. In Revelation 21, another preposition becomes important, not *over*, not *under*, but,

Revelation 21 (ESV) 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."

We will skip to verse 10, where we read more about the city:

Revelation 21 (ESV) And [the angel] carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

As God originally ordered things, His city *was over* the sun, but it is descending below it. So, the present order of things, where God lives *above* the sun and man *below* it, is going to change. God is coming down here, to be *with* us, in union, in fellowship, with us. This difference in prepositions signals what businessmen call a paradigm shift, that is, a crucial shift in outlook or in operations. Fellowship *with* God will characterize the new heaven and new earth—not division. As Paul mentioned there in II Corinthians 5, the fact of that fellowship changes the way we regard God, the way we deal with the brethren, the way we act toward those outside. And, it does so now!

I will conclude at Hebrews 12. In just a few days now, we will be taking the Passover, reading Christ's sublime words, preserved for our edification in John 14 through 17, words expressing the profound degree of our unity with the Father and the Son, they dwelling *in* us, fellowshiping *with* us. And, our fellowship with each other. At that time, let us be mindful of where we *really* are.

Hebrews 12:22-24 describes where we are now, spiritually seated in heavenly places with Christ, not in the future, but now. The description seems to be of a holy assembly. The verb *have come* is perfect tense, indicating completed action.

It is important to note that Paul wrote this in the context of his plea that Christians pursue peace, back in verse 14,

Hebrews 12:14 (ESV) Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord

But here we will be resuming the original theme in verse 22:

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Hebrews 12:22-24 (ESV) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

I Corinthians 7:31 (ESV) “the present form of this world is passing away.”

Please, do not lose sight of the fact that the old order, with its binary opposites, its distinctions, its divisions, is vanishing away, right now, as God destroys one wall after another, creating as He does so a new order, a new heaven and a new earth. That work continues apace today.

Let us ever be thankful that we, as new men, are part of that new creation, one characterized by unity, by peace, by fellowship *with* the Father, *with* His Son and *with* each other.