

Ecotheology Session 1 - Text Study

When God began to create heaven and earth—the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. 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, a first day. God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water.” God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so. God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. God said, “Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters He called Seas. And God saw that this was good. And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that this was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. (Genesis 1:1-13)

- What is the relationship being depicted in the text between humans, the natural world, and God?
- What resonates for you and what do you find challenging?

Halleluyah! Hail! THE OMnipresent from the heavens, praise God in the heights
Sing out your praises, all you angels; praise God, all you multitudes
Give praise to God, you sun and moon; praise God all you stars of light,
Praise God, heavens upon heavens, and you the waters up above the heavens!
Let all praise the name of THE ETERNAL, who commanded and things became,
Who raised them up forever and an aeon, who affixed a limit none could pass.
Give praise to the ALL POWERFUL throughout the earth, you dragons and
torrential depths,
You fire and hail and snow and smoke; you raging wind, all acting by God's word.
You mountains, all you hills; you fruit trees, bearing every seed.
You wild animals, and every beast; you creeping thing, and bird of wing.
You rulers of the earth, and all the nations – nobles, and you judges of the land.
You young men and you maidens, elders sitting with the young!
Let all bless the name of THE ETERNAL, for God's name alone is to be exalted.
God's majesty is in the earth and heavens.
God has raised the fortunes of our people; praises for the fervent ones,
For Israel's children, people near to God,
Halleluyah! (Psalm 148 – Translation Dr. Joel Rosenberg in Kol Haneshama
Siddur)

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Behold, The LORD will strip the earth bare, And lay it waste, And twist its surface, And scatter its inhabitants. Layman and priest shall fare alike, Slave and master, Handmaid and mistress, Buyer and seller, Lender and borrower, Creditor and debtor. The earth shall be bare, bare; It shall be plundered, plundered; For it is the LORD who spoke this word. The earth is withered, sear; The world languishes, it is sear; The most exalted people of the earth languish. For the earth was defiled Under its inhabitants; Because they transgressed teachings, Violated laws, Broke the ancient covenant. That is why a curse consumes the earth, And its inhabitants pay the penalty; That is why earth's dwellers have dwindled, And but few men are left. The new wine fails, The vine languishes; And all the merry-hearted sigh. Stilled is the merriment of timbrels, Ended the clamor of revelers, Stilled the merriment of lyres. They drink their wine without song; Liquor tastes bitter to the drinker. (Isaiah 24:1-9, "The Tyre Pronouncement")

If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the LORD your God and serving Him with all your heart and soul, I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil—I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill. Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. For the LORD's anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the LORD is assigning to you. (Dtr. 11:13-17)

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