



The Landing

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“God Creates Adam to Exalt Christ’s Coming”

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Genesis 2:1-9

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Introduction: Miraculous Births Point to Christ

My aim in this brand-new series of message for Advent is to launch Godward our wonder in the first advent of his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I say 'brand new' because I have never studied these things in this detail before. I now believe more fully than ever: all miraculous births in the Old Testament point directly to the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are eight miraculous births in the Bible. Adam, Eve, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, John and all these lead to the final miraculous birth in Scripture, that of Christ himself. Each of these miraculous births happened and were recorded in Holy Scripture to enflame our faith and wonder and thanks for Christ's first coming, and to make our hearts surge with hope and assurance of his second Advent.

Our unshakable confidence in reading the Old Testament this way comes from Romans 15:4, *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* Paul, by the Holy Spirit, means for us to glean real, tangible hope in Christ from reading the Scriptures. So let's begin at the beginning.

Adam's Miraculous Creation

This morning I want to look briefly at Adam's miraculous creation in Genesis 2:1-9. Here we will see three deep aches of the human soul that each point to Christ's first Advent, his miraculous birth to Mary just as the Angel foretold. Those deep aches come as no surprise: suffering, death, evil. Though God hates each one of these aches, He has ordained each to exist to serve his highest purposes of rest, life and salvation in our lives.

Peace On Earth

In other words, Adam's creation reveals to us this fallen world provides no true peace. But true and lasting peace is found in one place, in the redemption of Jesus Christ alone. Peace is the sum of rest, life and salvation. This peace is the reason Christ came to earth.

As the angelic choir sang to the shepherds at his birth, (Luke 2:14), *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"* This fulfills Isaiah prophecy of Christ bearing the name, *"Prince of Peace"* (Isaiah 9:6-7). Yet both of these verses imply the ache I mentioned. God's peace through Christ is not universal. He doesn't make peace with the devil. He makes peace only with those with whom he is pleased. This begs the question: how am I made pleasing to God? Or Christ's title *"Prince of Peace"* implies a royal reign over a kingdom, by definition, distinct from other kingdoms. Christ's peace is a dividing, rescuing, purifying peace: no enemies, no traitors, no insurrectionists. He is not Prince for nothing!

True Peace

What exactly is this true peace, the kind of which Christ is prince? Let's look to our passage. As we do, remember God is the only person in perfect peace. And perfect peace comes to those who receive it only from Him. Three times the New Testament calls God the God of peace (Philippians 4:9, I Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 13:20).

Why? Why is God the only person at perfect peace? The answer comes from the very beginning of all things. Look with me to the God of peace in Genesis chapter 2. As we gaze on the living Scriptures, may the Lord create in us the very peace we see revealed there!

God Reigns in Peace

Genesis 2:1-3, *"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done."*

So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation."

What does God do after creating the heavens and the earth in six days? Verse 2 says on the seventh day God finished his work and **rested** on the seventh day. What does it mean for God to rest? You should know the Hebrew word translated 'rested' is שָׁבַת (shabbat). It is the verbal form of Sabbath. Don't miss the poetic play on the repeated word "seventh" (v.2,3) which is a related adjective of the same word. God made the seventh day holy, by resting, not to take a breather and sip ice-tea, but to worship! God doesn't need a rest. Nor does he stop working when he rests for he sustains by his power the very world he created!

God Worships God

No, when God rests it is to worship. But his worship can only be directed at one worthy object, namely Himself! God worships God. He would be an idolater to worship anything or anyone less. So verse 4 is a poetic praise song God writes to his own creative glory. Even in English the rhythm can't be missed:

*"These are the generations of the heavens and the earth
when they were created,
in the day that the LORD God
made the earth and the heavens."*

For God self-exaltation is a virtue. He is the only being worthy of his praise. God worships God.

Yet, God ordains that all who hear of the Advent of the Son worship Christ at his birth. The wise man from the east fall down before the baby and worship him (Mt. 2:11). Herod seeks duplicitously to worship him (Mt. 2:8). The Shepherds (2:20) and Angels worship him (Luke 2:14), Mary worships her son (Luke 1:46ff) and when Jesus is first presented at the Temple, Christ is worshipped by both Simeon (Luke 2:28-32) and Anna (Luke 2:37-38)!

But God alone is due worship. So is God instigating idolatry against himself in calling us to worship his Son? Of course not! No, indeed God ordains the worship of his Son, because his Son is God Himself! So in a mysterious and wonderful way, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, worships himself as God! Mind-blowing isn't it?

Christ Created His Own Body

But Jesus is not only worshipped at his birth, he is also the present and creating his own body at his birth. He is the eternal one who with the Father creates all that exists, including his own body! John 1:1–3, *“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.”* He is the Son who upholds the world by the word of his power in Hebrews 1:3! Christ uphold the universe while he was being born!

What’s crucial to observe is how good it is for everyone that God worships God and the Son worships God. The divine Trinity is the most desirable, precious, beautiful, loving, glorious and joy-supplying being conceivable. And that waterfall of goodness only comes as we draw near to him and worship him. Psalm 16:11 teaches, *“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*

So God would simply be less than good if he did not require the universe to come to him in worship. His self-exaltation is the most loving think he could ever do! Why? Because it brings us to himself. And he is the best of all possible beings. God’s self-worship is his love to us.

God’s Peace

Pondering the God-centeredness of God is where we discover the origin of God’s peace. One of the precious blessings that so many of us simply settle to live without, but God means to fill our every moment, is true, sovereign, sweet peace. The kind of peace he enjoys in himself. Where does this peace, this advent peace come from? It comes from joining God in worshipping God. Listen to the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 26:3, *“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”*

God’s mind is stayed on God, and he is immovable in perfect peace. So also with us, when our mind is stayed on God, we remain in the same impenetrable, immovable peace.

Deeper Peace

We can speak even more deeply: the Hebrew word translated peace is שָׁלוֹם (shalom). It means ‘wholeness, integrity, and solidarity within oneself.’ Apply this to God: He is the most ‘of himself’ being imaginable. Nothing divides him; he is One. Nothing of his words or actions differ from

his being or character. He is perfect in his shalom, his peace. So also with us: when we fix our eyes upon God and take on his character, we who are made in his image become whole. We come to ourselves. Our words and actions unite to our soul and identity. There in-lies our deepest peace.

War Before Peace

But there is war before peace. The fallen natural world wars against our peace. Our own hearts enslave us. Our bodies betray us. The land resists us. Evil exists to incite self-harm and thus divide us from ourselves. In the remainder of our passage you can see the three aches I mentioned earlier: suffering, death, and evil. These are at war with your whole being, now and forever. The peace we desire is a mighty, conquering, sovereign peace.

Allow God's Word to show you how such a mighty peace more than defeats the forces that war against it.

I. Worship Christ For He is Our Sabbath (verse 3)

Answering our ache of suffering is Genesis 2:3, *"So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation."*

We ache for rest. But sin makes work hard. Remember the curse God pronounced upon man after he was tempted and committed the first sin with Eve, Genesis 3:17–19,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it, ' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

When your computer malfunctions, and your car doesn't start, and heavy snow strains your heart muscle, and sweat drips from your brow, it's not because work is hard; it's because the land is cursed. Blizzards, earthquakes, tornados and tsunamis are natural, they are effects of evil. They should all remind us that God is holy, sin is evil and the land on which we stand is cursed.

This curse is the origin of all suffering everywhere. From this suffering and the curse which created we need rest. We need real, healing, cosmos-recreating rest.

Jesus Christ is our Sabbath

Listen to how the inspired writer supplies our hope. Our rest is not found in a special day of the week, but in a person. Sabbath rest is found in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:9-10, *“So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.”* Entering God's rest means trusting in Jesus Christ, the only one who offers rest (Matthew 11:28).

The ache of global suffering comes in and through Jesus Christ alone, our Sabbath rest. Racial hatred has been harmonized in him at the cross. Wars, fighting, conflict, economic strife and hatred all crumble at the presence of his glory. His death purchases an unshakable city whose designer and builder is God (Heb. 11:10). So those trusting in Christ our Sabbath fulfil Hebrews 11:14, *“For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.”*

The ache of suffering finds its final rest in Jesus Christ, our eternal Sabbath rest. As he enables you, trust him. Cry out to him. Believe in him. Let the breath-robbing curse spoken to Adam and us all, drive you to fiercely rest in your true Sabbath, Jesus Christ.

II. Worship Christ For He Became Dust as We Are (vs. 5-7)

Did you notice the very end of God's curse upon Adam: verse 19,

*“By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

This points to the very means by which Adam was miraculously crafted by God. Here's Genesis 2:5-7, *“When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”*

God made a living human being out of dust. No animal is ever bestowed the 'breath of life' from God. The animals merely exist. Man alone becomes alive with God's breath. But to remind us of our origins with the land, we will be dust all our lives. We return to dust in death. This means we are weak and easily susceptible to the curse of sin upon the land and all humanity.

Being dust, we ache for our last enemy to be defeated, that is death. So we need two things desperately. One, we need redemption from the deadly curse that comes to all dustlings. And two, we need new bodies. Bodies that cannot die. We need bodies no longer vulnerable to the curse and its resulting death. Jesus Christ's death on the cross supplies the first, and his resurrection supplies the second!

Redemption from the Curse

In our cursed dust nature, God remembers that we are dust and his mercy on us. Psalm 103:13-14, *"As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust."*

And being dust we are under sin's curse. Only Christ is our sin-bearer. This the Angel told Joseph referring to his betrothed Mary, *"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21). Paul confirms in power this great truth, "Galatians 3:13, *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us..."*

So Jesus Christ not only defangs the suffering all around us; but he transforms our response to that suffering. Instead of complaining, grumbling, resisting, hating God, or rebelling against him; we submit, we receive, we humble ourselves and we worship Him. Christ's death not only buys you new circumstances; but he buys you a new attitude toward them!

Every enemy of peace comes from sin's curse upon the world. Christ alone remove that curse.

New Immortal Bodies. These new bodies are found alone in Jesus Christ. Mary, the dustling, gave birth to the Christ-child who became a dustling to give eternal life to our dust-bound bodies. Jesus Christ became dust like us so we could become immortal like him!

The Apostle Paul reflecting on Genesis 2:7 writes, *"Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving*

spirit. [46] But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. [47] The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. [48] As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. [49] Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."

There it is: 'a life-giving spirit,' 'those who are from heaven,' 'bearing the image of the man of heaven.'" All three describe the same reality: we will receive immortal, eternal bodies like Christ because He rose from the dust of the grave! Dust no more, now destined for life!

We ache for death to be defeated by eternal life, because we are in Adam. Christ's first Advent lifts the curse and transforms dust into the indestructible. Wonder at him, thank him and worship him.

III. Worship Christ For He Fulfills God's Salvation Plan (vs. 8-9)

At Christ's birth he becomes our rest and our life. Now we see he becomes our salvation. Look with me to verses 8-9,

"And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

We ache over all evil. And yearn to be purged of it. Or so we like to think. Actually, the tolerance, no, the lust for evil remains within us. Evil isn't just out there; its inside us. We not only need to be saved from God's wrath, we need to be saved from ourselves. Goodness in us aches to be saved from such intimate evil.

Why Two Trees?

The closest reason we can give for why God put two trees in the Garden of Eden was to signal that world history and eternity will be marked by two seeds: one of faith and one of unbelief. Eating of the first tree, the tree of life is an act of faith which looks to God to reveal what is good and evil, by His holy law and by the Holy Spirit. Eating of the second tree is to seek to know good and evil without God, relying on ourselves instead of God. It is rooted in self-educating pride.

Both trees have New Testament counterpoints. The tree of life provides eternal life. In John's Revelation the Spirit holds out the promise of this tree

to the conquerors, *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God"* (Revelation 2:7). And in the final chapter Scripture we are told that a tree of life will reside on either side of the River of Life flowing from the Lamb's throne, and leaves from these trees will heal the nations!

And we see this tree of life as the great reward of all those coming in righteousness into the celestial city. Remember Revelation 22:14, *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates."*

But the tree of the knowledge of good and evil emerges in later times too. Surely it was symbolized by the tree The Baptizer warned of having an axe laid at it's root (Mt. 3:10), and by the fig tree Jesus withered (Mt. 21:19). This deadly tree took form in the limb Judas used to hang himself after betraying our Lord (Matthew 27:3-8).

Two Trees Combine

But both trees combine into one at Calvary. There the tree of the knowledge of good and evil becomes the very means of torture and death of the least worthy recipient, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And at that same moment the death tree begets life. All who look to him by faith are made alive!

So Paul preached at Antioch, *"And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. [30] But God raised him from the dead,"* (Acts 13:29-30). And Peter declares by the Spirit, *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed"* (1 Peter 2:24). In one tree, the wonder of the first is exalted and the wickedness of the second is exposed.

We ache for powerful, effectual salvation. Christ has achieved it. Choose the tree of life. Conquer and crucify your pride by faith. Yield to God's law and his Holy Spirit to train your conscience and command your heart. Repent of seeking to teach yourself the knowledge of right and wrong, good and evil. Learn from God. Obey his command to believe. Trust him. Worship him.

Conclusion: Overcoming Peace

The aches of Adam's miraculous beginning find their fulfillment in the joys of Christ's ministry. In him we find real rest as our Sabbath. In him we find eternal life defeating death. And in him we see our only hope for true salvation in the cross.

Combined together, this rest, life and salvation are the peace Jesus came to supply to all who believe. As his mother sang, he came, *"...to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Luke 1:79).

Fret not over plans you have yet to see fulfilled, hopes yet realized, finances yet supplies, sins yet defeated. Trust in God, worship him for the perfect peace He offers to you and achieves in you.

Listen to the voice of your Prince of Peace in his supreme promise and command, *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33). His peace is with you and comes to you with all his world creating power. Believe it. Rest in it. Worship Him for it.

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