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“The New Creation in the Psalms”

June 2, 2013

Sermon Text: Psalms

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor 15:21-58

Introduction-

Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (28) And God blessed them. And God said to them,

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have

dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God commissioned Adam and Eve to take dominion over all creation. They were to multiply and fill the earth with a race of divine image-bearers, reflecting the glory of God to the ends of the earth.

As we know, it all went wrong. Adam was ruled by the serpent. He did not attain the blessing pronounced in Psalm 1 –

Psalms 1:1-6 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; (2) but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. (3) He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. (4) The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. (5) Therefore the

wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; (6) for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

It is no coincidence that Psalm 1 compares the blessed man to a fruitful tree planted by streams of water. We have heard of such a tree before-

Genesis 2:8-10 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. (9) 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. (10) A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

And that tree will appear once more-

Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb (2) through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the

tree were for the healing of the nations.

The first Adam failed. The second and last Adam succeeded and we are on our way back to Eden – the new heavens and the new earth.

This great theme of the Bible, as you know, can be traced from Genesis to Revelation. As we have said many times, the Bible begins and ends in Eden. G.K. Beale believes, and I think rightly so, that the fulfillment of Genesis 1:28 is the primary storyline of Scripture and so it is not surprising that we can trace it in every book of the Bible.

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them. And God said to them,

- "Be fruitful and multiply
- and fill the earth and subdue it
- and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

For the glory of God, man was to bear His image and glory to the ends of creation, expanding Eden to the uttermost parts of the Earth. Understanding this enables us to understand the Bible –

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

To the end of the earth, you see. The gospel is God's power to call out and transform a new people for Himself – all effected by the new Adam, Jesus Christ.

This morning then, I wanted to show you some examples of the New Creation in the Psalms, so that you will have a greater appreciation for this portion of God's Word as you see more clearly how the history of our redemption in Christ is traced out in selected Psalms.

Psalm 2

Psalms 2:1-12 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." (4) He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. (5) Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, (6) "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my

holy hill." (7) I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. (8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (9) You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (10) Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Here we see the kings of the earth – the nations – in rebellion against the Creator. Man is supposed to be glorifying God in the earth, but instead he is God's enemy. This is the curse in action. All is gone wrong.

One day this will all be reversed:

Psalms 22:27-28 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. (28) For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

Understand? This is how it was supposed to be! Christ is bringing all things right.

But for now, you have this rebellion by the kings and the nations. What is the Lord's response to all of these "mighty" men?

He who sits in the heavens laughs.

The One true King is established. And here, Christ the Messiah speaks!

(7) I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. (8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (9) You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Do you see this? The King, the Messiah, is speaking and He is telling us what the Father has decreed. He quotes the words of this decree. The New Testament quotes this decree:

Hebrews 1:1-5 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, (2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (3) He is the radiance of

the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (4) having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (5) For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?

Acts 13:30-34 But God raised him from the dead, (31) and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. (32) And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, (33) this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' (34) And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.'

Hebrews 5:5-6 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him

who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; (6) as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

When did this decree take place? These New Testament passages seem to indicate that Christ was begotten as King and Priest upon His resurrection and ascension.

So that right now, Christ is seated at the Father's right hand:

Hebrews 10:12-13 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, (13) waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

This is all then the carrying forward to Genesis 1:28.

Revelation 5:8-10 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (9) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe

and language and people and nation, (10) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

And thus Psalm 2 ends with this sobering warning to all the kings and nations:

(10) Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Let's look at another:

Psalm 8

Psalms 8:1-9 To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. (2) Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you

have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. (3) When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, (4) what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? **(5) Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. (6) You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, (7) all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, (8) the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.** (9) O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Here then we see a reiteration of Genesis 1:28. Listen to the author of Hebrews comment on this:

Hebrews 2:6-10 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? (7) You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, (8) putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in

putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. **At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.** (9) But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (10) For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Do we see this creation subject to man right now? No, as Hebrews says. But what we DO see is one Man, Jesus, right now crowned with glory and honor. He is raised and He is ascended to the Father's right hand, to the place of the King. And this King *is bringing many sons to glory*, setting all things right, so that Genesis 1:28 will be fulfilled-

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

This is why the church is called a kingdom or nation of priests, and why

we are given these kinds of instructions as Peter gives us here:

1 Peter 2:9-12 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (10) Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (11) Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (12) Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

See our purpose? It is the Genesis 1:28 commission – *that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you...*”.

NOTE: Following Christ is not mere moralism. No. We don't turn from evil and do good simply to make other people happy and somehow conform to a society's rules. We are following Him in this great campaign to rule and subdue the earth, announcing the glory of God to every corner of creation. THAT is why we must abstain from

evil. Because we are to display more and more the glory of God to the nations, so they might humble themselves and see that glory as well.

All of this is accomplished in one Man, the last Adam, so often described in the Psalms as God's King.

Romans 5:15-21 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (16) And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. (17) For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (18) Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (19) For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (20) Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but

where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, (21) so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalm 72

Psalms 72:1-20 Of Solomon. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! (2) May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! (3) Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! (4) May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! (5) May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! (6) May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! **(7) In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!**

(8) May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

(9) May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! (10) May the kings of

Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! (11) May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!

(12) For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. (13) He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.

(14) From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. (15) Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day!

(16) May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! (17) May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed! (18) Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

(19) Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory!

Amen and Amen! (20) The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.

Here again we see, in Christ the King, Genesis 1:28 being fulfilled. You have:

- The righteous flourishing (be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth)
- Man taking dominion of the creation to the ends of the earth
- A reversal of the curse on the earth so that crops are once again abundant
- The whole earth will be filled with His glory

Notice also another wonderful aspect of the King's reign. He renders perfect justice.

(12) For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. (13) He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. (14) From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.

A terrible aspect of the curse is that this world is filled with injustice. That injustice ALWAYS favors the powerful and oppresses the weak and poor. Always. Therefore, as His holy nation, WE must work diligently to

reflect Christ's justice in this world. WE must have pity on the weak and the needy and WE must strive to save their lives. It is our calling to deliver them from oppression and violence. This is a very practical and tangible way for us to display the glory of God in all the earth.

Question: What is the means by which the people of God today are to "be fruitful and multiply and have dominion over the earth?" Some Christians take it quite literally. Have children, enact God's Law in nations, and sometimes even by the power of the sword. But Christ's kingdom is a spiritual one and not of this world. Listen to G.K. Beale's comment on this:

"In the repetition of the commission (of Genesis 1:28) to the patriarchs (such as Noah, Abraham, etc), the mention of 'all the nations of the earth being blessed by Abraham's seed' alludes to a renewed human community bearing God's image and filling the earth with a renewed progeny who also reflect God's image and shine out its luminosity to others in the city of man who do not rebel and also come to reflect God. Thus, these new converts are blessed with the favor of God's glorious presence and become a part of God's ever-increasing kingdom and rule, which the first Adam had forfeited.

Hence, the ruling and subduing of Gen 1:28 now includes spiritually overcoming the influence of evil in the hearts of unregenerate humanity that has multiplied on the earth. The implication is that the notion of physical newborn children increasing and multiplying in the original Gen 1:28 commission now includes people who have left their old way of life and have become spiritually newborn and have come to reflect the image of God's glorious presence and participate in the expanding nature of the Gen 1:26-28 commission."

Understand? This is why we preach the gospel of Christ and call upon people to repent and believe. It is why we are to live holy lives. THIS is how we are fruitful and multiply.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

You can see the very same thing in Paul's words in the 4th chapter of Romans –

Romans 4:1-13 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our

forefather according to the flesh? (2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. (3) For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." (4) Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. (5) And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, (6) just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: (7) "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; (8) blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin." (9) Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. (10) How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. (11) He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. **The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, (12)**

and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. (13) For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

The Psalms have many, many more references to Messiah the King and how it is in Him that God effects the accomplishment of His original plan for man to spread God's glory throughout the entire creation. And of course this same history of redemption is found in every other part of the Bible as well. The Bible is the story of Paradise lost and Paradise regained and exceeded.

Let me conclude by reading a summary of these very things taken from Richard Barcellos' book *Better Than the Beginning-*

“Due to Christ's faithfulness, He obtains an eternal inheritance for all those He came to save, unlike Adam and Israel who were unfaithful. The New Testament interprets Christ's coming as the fulfillment of Israel's hopes. The New Testament also understand the church as the

fulfillment of the eschatological Israel of Old Testament prophecy. The Lord's servant, Jesus Christ, unlike Old Covenant Israel, was faithful and became a light both to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:23), just as “the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place” (Acts 26:22).

Old Testament Israel was a means to an end. The end is not Palestine. The end is not an earthly, Jerusalem temple at which animal sacrifices are offered. Ancient Israel was chosen by God to be a means through which the last Adam would come. She was also a means through which His Person, His Work, His people, and His kingdom were typified. Israel has connections with the first man, Adam and the last Adam, Jesus Christ.

The Bible is God's book. It possesses a unity, a progress of thought, and a goal that only God could ensure. It is not a book containing fallible records of two of the world's most prominent religions. It is the infallible, written Word of God. It is God's record of how He will get glory for Himself through what He does through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The world in which we now live is fraught with trouble. The answer to all the failure in the world is not a political one. The answer is not a

Christian America or any other country in the world. The answer is not to convince others that humanity has utopian potential. Since the problem involves sinful human nature and is not fixable by sinful human nature, the solution is not to be found in sinful human nature. The answer is found in the Bible alone, specifically in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel is news from God that He has devised a way to repair human nature and take all creation to a glorious end. That glorious end, the city of God, new Jerusalem, the eternal state, the new heavens and new earth, is better than the beginning. In the beginning, though the potential for what comes about at the end was present, it was never attained by Adam. In the end, however, something better (much better!) than the beginning is brought about through the obedience of Jesus Christ. John Owen's words are helpful at this point:

Man, especially, was utterly lost, and came short of the glory of God, for which he was created, Rom 3:23. Here, now, doth the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God open itself. A design in Christ shines out from his bosom, that was lodged there from eternity, to recover things to such an estate as shall be exceedingly to the advantage of his glory, infinitely above what at first

appeared, and for the putting of sinners into inconceivably a better condition than they were in before the entrance of sin.

According to Owen, the end is better than the beginning.

We end today with the hymn with which Barcellos closes his book – In Emmanuel's Land – a very fitting hymn indeed.