

# PAUL'S OT

CREATION | WEEK 2: SEPT 20, 2015

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## CREATION PRESUPPOSED

Paul assumes that the God of whom he speaks is the creator, the maker of heaven and earth.

Romans 1:18-24

God has made a world in which the signs of his power, glory and even his very deity ought to be picked up by humans.

1 Corinthians 10:26 (quoting Ps 24:1)

He has made all things, and humans can and should thank him for them all. Paul can quote obvious biblical statements of the worldview-shaping premise.

## CREATION AS PAUL'S NARRATIVE

- 1) The creator God made a world *with a purpose*, and entrusted that purpose to humans.
- 2) The humans to whom the task was entrusted abused that trust and rebelled.

This results in both a problem to solve (creation is out of joint) and a task to complete (humans have fallen down on the job).

One of the standard Jewish ways of addressing the problem of the creator and the cosmos was to speak in terms of two epochs of world history: the present age and the age to come.

## CREATION ACCORDING TO PAUL

Paul's specific contribution to this overarching narrative is to insist that the 'coming age' has already been inaugurated (though not yet completed) through Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15

Paul speaks of the result of Jesus' accomplishment in terms of 'new creation'.

Galatians 6:14-16

It is the *kosmos* that has been crucified...A new reality has been brought into being that determines the destiny of the whole creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17 and Romans 12:2

The 'present age' is continuing, but followers of the Messiah must no longer conform to it.

Romans 8:18-25

What Paul believes to be the case in terms of *time* is also the case in terms of *matter*. The creator intends to create a new world, a new *kosmos*, out of the womb of the old.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

This is a deeply *creational* view of the future, in which 'death', the thing that threatens the goodness and God-giveness of creation itself is cast in the role of the 'enemy' to be defeated. This defeat has already happened in the case of Jesus himself, the Messiah who has been raised from the dead. That victory will be implemented at last for the entire creation, leaving God the creator as 'all in all'.

With the 'revelation' or 'apocalypse' of Jesus, and particularly his death and resurrection, the 'age to come' has not only been unveiled; it has been opened for others to enter, in advance of its full and final appearing.

References:

N. T. Wright. *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013) 475-485.

