

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Worship Through Creation

Master of Arts in Music and Worship

by

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May 2021

WORSHIP THROUGH CREATION

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A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Music and Worship


Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

May 2021

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Introduction

“In the beginning...”¹ is a phrase that Christians and non-Christians alike have recognized as a main headline to the origins of humanity, the earth, and the cosmos. Some believe that the Bible is just an ancient historical text that is built off religious belief systems. While some believe this ancient text holds validity, power, and is the key to understanding how humanity came to be formed. The concept of how the universe came into existence is a great draw for people who want to know more about themselves and their purpose in life. Every human being wants to know how and why they exist. In this study there are a few foundational steps that need to be established so that the remaining pages to follow will be built on those core beliefs. The first is that the stance of this paper is that all of the Bible is the Word of God and is given to the body of Messiah for “teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”² If this foundational understanding is not grasped then the principles found in this work will be just another passing writing that holds no truth, but if one can take hold of God’s Word and let it transform and uplift them then the concepts in this work will be encouraging and hopefully eye-opening to understand ones identity and purpose for their existence.

The second foundational element that will be set as a core understanding is that God is made up of three individualities united as one, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.³ The Son, being the incarnation of God himself in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, died for all sin and was resurrected three days later to give anyone who follows him everlasting life. This resurrection

¹ Gen. 1:1, NIV.

² II Tim. 3:16-17, NIV.

³ Frame, John M., *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Forward by J. I. Packer), (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2013), 446.

power, given by the Holy Spirit, now lives in the souls of all who believe and follow Jesus.⁴ This story of truth needs to be known in this work to allow the principles to be fully processed and recognized. The third core building block to be set as a foundation is the basic understanding of worship. Worship is a culmination of various pieces. Many people will choose one element and stand on it as the sole definition, but the concept of worship can be whittled down to three main ideas.

First, worship is vehicle we use to build a relationship with God the Father.⁵ By having intimate personal times with God it allows the individual to hear the voice of God and to lean into His presence. Second, worship is the primary tool to present the glory and honor to God that He deserves.⁶ Thirdly, worship *is* the actions in which all is done for God's glory and honor that He deserves. Yes, the last two are very similar. God deserves glory and honor, and it can be done through many means, including the very actions of each believer. Notice the wording chosen, "worship *is* the actions". Plural activities, movements, workings, and efforts make up the singularity of worship. Whether this is the physical worship postures; kneeling, raising hands, and dancing, or it is the activities of the day; waking up, getting ready, going to work, and spending time with family, it is all done in the one united concept of "worship".

The entire concept can be analyzed and developed with the core foundations of this paper. Worship has been a primary vein in the deeper workings of humanity and creation since the beginning, and this work will just scrape the surface of the more significant movement of God's purpose in humanity and creation. The central portions that will be covered are all

⁴ Ibid, 925.

⁵ Whaley, Vernon M., *Called to Worship: From the Dawn of Creation to the Final Amen*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson. 2009),298.

⁶ Kauflin, Bob, *Worship Matters (Foreword by Paul Baloche)*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway. 2008), 62.

connected to form the full story of creation. The original design of creation, how God intended worship to be, creation was then broken by mankind and this created a brokenness in worship, and the journey that each believer walks out to become that “new creation”⁷. That journey starts with the prophecy to Eve in Genesis 3:14-16 and leads to the current modern church. Then finally the story lands with the fully renewed creation, the new heaven and earth, the restored worship and the relationship with God the way He originally intended it to be. Hopefully after reading this paper one could understand the intended creation of relationship and worship with God and one can then worship in a new and refreshing understanding, knowing that there is a deep impression on each heart with a unique identity given by the Father God.

Chapter 1: Created to Worship

How was worship initially intended to look like and how was it supposed to function? Many of the churches in the western civilization have grown accustomed to the idea that worship is mega-music industry, lots of up lifting choruses, and the smaller churches try to emulate what the mega-churches are doing musically and technologically to fit the modern idea of “worship”. Though the cultural norm is to fall into this form of thinking, there is a need to look closely at how God originally designed worship. Worship is a foundational piece to the original formation of the earth. God spoke life into existence and breathed His breath into Adam and Eve. Many theologians, preachers, teachers, and average Christians try to dig deeper and deeper into scripture to find hidden meaning behind the purpose of life and the design of worship in the Bible, but it can be over complicated in approach and cumbersome in explanation. When pulling back the layers of what creation looked like in the beginning there can be found three main foundations of God’s

⁷ II Cor. 5:17, NIV.

design for worship. These three foundational elements are also the groundwork for a life filled with God's fullness and joy.

The first element found in Genesis 1 is the simple yet powerful truth that all humanity is formed in the likeness of the creator, God. "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."⁸ This important verse is a key that can open many doors to questions that believers and non-believers ask every day. Being created in God's image defines the purpose and brings excitement to life. God had such purpose and intentionality in His design of all humankind that He did it in His likeness, and with His breath.

The wording God used was to make man in "our image". *Our*, being the collective of the three entities of God, making up the one singularity of God. The Father, the Son, and The Holy Spirit. Many arguments have been made from the secular worldview that the Bible is a male-chauvinistic and masculine bias-based document that was written in a time that men overruled women. This argument has been a turn off for many people and has given an open door to ungodly beliefs about God. However, when noticing the original context of this verse, one will see that both Adam *and* Eve were created. How can both male and female be made from a God who is always referred as "He" or "Him"? If God made mankind in His image, both male and female, why cannot it be seen more often in scripture? This question is answered through studying the written language of origin. Hebrew is an ancient language that is widely different from the modern English language. Hebrew, like many other languages, takes on male and

⁸ Gen. 1:26-27, NIV.

female forms for various words and contexts. Whenever the Father God is mentioned in scripture it takes on the masculine form of the Hebrew word. Whenever the Son, Jesus is mentioned, it also takes on the masculine form. However, when the language for the Holy Spirit is mentioned it used feminine forms of the language. The Hebrew for The Holy Spirit is רוח הקודש, *Ruach ha-kodesh*.⁹ The use of this word is in the feminine form, *Ruach* meaning breath, and *ha-kodesh* meaning the holy. This same word for ‘breath’ is seen to be the forming and hovering spirit of God in the creation story. “Now the earth was chaos and waste, darkness was on the surface of the deep, and the *Ruach Elohim* (breath of God) was hovering upon the surface of the water.”¹⁰

There are consistent references to this caring, tender, feminine quality of God throughout scripture. These scriptures refer to God’s caring, loving, comforting, and delicate nature, which again, is embedded in the creation of mankind. Now, when seeing God’s image in its fullest, one can see there is the Father, the Son, and the maternal parts of God, all working in perfect unity with each other. This is the image He created in the heart of mankind, the image of a family. When this God centered image is tainted, distorted, and abused, it is literally breaking the very structure of God’s image that He so carefully and designed. This true identity for each person on the earth can transform their life, gives purpose to each breath, and gives hope for each day.

The second element found in the original design of creation that helps form the story of worship is the purpose, or function, for humanity. After being formed like God, God then gives Adam and Eve a passion like His as well. The passion to create, produce, and to maintain. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on

⁹ Pratico, Gary D., and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Second Edition*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

¹⁰ Gen. 1:2, Tree of Life Translation.

the ground.”¹¹ These qualities of creativeness and working are passions of God. He instilled a heart to create something and to maintain, just as He created and maintain His creation. Like Father like son. Mankind wants to be like their dad, the creative passions of each individual is unique and beautiful. This is how the heart of mankind was created to be, to use those creative giftings and passions for a lifetime of worship back to the Father.

This portion of the origins of worship is vital to see the more outstanding picture of how perfect worship was meant to be. In everything one does it must be for living out this heart of God. In all details of life, it leads back to this depth of the created heart for living consistently in the mindset of worship to God. God summarizes this in His commandments given to Moses for the people of Israel, ”Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”¹² As God told Adam and Eve to go live life, create and maintain, so this commandment rings true as well. In all aspects of life, do it with God’s word pressed against the mind and the heart.

The third element of worship that was instilled at the beginning of Genesis was that God wanted a close relationship with Adam and Eve. In Genesis there is a clear communication between God and mankind, one that shows depth to the relationship and a physical connection of God’s presence on the earth. In chapter three it says, “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from

¹¹ Gen. 1:28, NIV

¹² Deut. 6:4-9, NIV.

the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”¹³ God walked and enjoyed the beauty of His creation on earth, Adam and Eve *heard* Him walking. The brushing of leaves, the rustling of bushes. There was a physical manifestation of God on earth. Sadly, this scripture also shows the beginning of the separation and tension of the relationship between God and man. But God wanted and still wants that relationship with all mankind. The closeness that was originated in His design is evident. This intimate relationship is depicted in the old hymn,

“In the Garden” by C. Austin Miles

I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The son of God discloses

And he walks with me and he talks with me
And he tells me I am his own
And the joy we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known¹⁴

These elements of God’s personal fingerprint on each life with the fullness of His image engrained on each heart; the heart for creating and maintaining a craft; and the intended relationship between God and mankind are the basic three pieces to understanding how worship is to function, how worship is to affect each life, and how each human on the face of the earth can live a life drastically different than how the world expects them to live. Intimacy with the Father can be less complicated than how the average believer thinks, but the journey to finding this intended original design of life can be one of the most challenging journeys to take.

¹³ Gen. 3:8, NIV.

¹⁴ Morgan, Robert J., *Then Sings My Soul Book 1: 150 of the World’s Greatest Hymn Stories*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003. 270.

Chapter 2: Broken Creation

By realizing the original design of how worship was meant to be this intimate relationship with God, it helps one understand how damaging sin was on the world. A creation that was intended to be a perfect place for God and man to be together was turned on its head and was made a broken place that had a great divide between God and His creation that was meant to live intimately with Him. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil it created the great separation between God and mankind.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.¹⁵

This moment of temptation is the pivotal piece of history that set in motion both the brokenness of sin and God’s master plan for redemption. When God spoke to Adam and Eve about the curse of sin, He also prophesies concerning the Messiah that would destroy death and sin. God prophesied to the serpent who tempted them saying, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”¹⁶ This seed of Eve that God speaks of is the coming Messiah, Jesus. God

¹⁵ Gen. 3:1-7, NIV.

¹⁶ Gen. 3:15, NIV.

immediately had the plan of redemption and set it in motion the moment Adam and Eve fell. Mankind brought sin into the world, but God brought hope and the cure.

Because sin entered the world, worship was then greatly affected. Since worship is the intimate and active relationship between mankind and God, and that relationship was severed at the Fall, then worship became a difficult skill to learn. Worship and the intimate relationship with God were the natural default settings at creation, but now it became a daily decision that needed, and still needs, intentional thought behind its actions. Throughout history one can see where some people lived a life of worship and where some fell short. The first murder recorded in the Bible was over the very act of worship. When Cain and Abel both brought offerings before God there was a difference between the hearts behind their worship and God found Abel's gift pleasing, but not Cain's. God gives Cain guidance to help overcome his anger and pride in his worship, but Cain accepts his sin and murders his brother Abel in his jealousy.¹⁷ This story of worship is vital for understanding how a broken creation caused worship to be broken as well. God still longed for worship, he even tried to help Cain overcome his sinful heart behind worship, but there is a battle for humble and pure worship in mankind's heart. Worship is still accessible, but there is a deficiency in every heart that can only be filled by God. Throughout the early history found in the bible there are sinful men that brought corrupt and detestable actions into the world.

The heart of pride in worship is a slippery slope that causes the worshiper to worship the idol of themselves and not the one true God. This pattern of prideful worship has been a cycle throughout all of scripture and still takes space today. It can be found when men thought they

¹⁷ Towns, Elmer L., and Vernon M. Whale, *Worship through the Ages: How the Great Awakenings Shape Evangelical Worship*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 12.

could be as great as God and build a tower as high as heaven. This tower became their prideful pinnacle that would try to elevate themselves higher than God, but God scattered their speech and scattered them across the earth. The Tower of Babel is a perfect picture of how worship can easily become prideful.¹⁸ The brokenness of pride in worship is a consistent fault of mankind throughout scripture and history. God gave clear direction to Moses in Exodus chapter 20 when He said, “You shall have no other gods before me.”¹⁹ This first commandment from the great ten is the primary commandment that God desired. He wanted, and still wants, the heart of his chosen people to worship him and him alone. When the heart is pulled from the worship of God it is aimed at unworthy, unrighteous, sinful, and broken images. Whether that is physical objects or if it is selfish desires of the heart.

To understand how heart-breaking idolatry is to God, one must remember what was discussed earlier. If worship of a false image of a god is idolatry, then what *is* the image that one should worship? Think on the trinity as discussed in Section 1. God is made up of the three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The perfect unity of God represents the intended creation of the family unit, a father, mother, and son. Along with that picture of a family unit, there is the idea that each has been created in the image of God. Each individual holds a unique piece of God’s impression on their hearts. When this idea of holding God’s image on each life is tainted, it becomes idolatry. When an individual denies the image of God in their life it becomes idolatry. It breaks God’s heart to see humanity fight against worldly views of identity and insecurities: self-hatred, self-doubt, distorted body image, trying to fit in with different crowds, sexual orientation, and so many more. These identity insecurities and brokenness breaks God’s heart so deeply.

¹⁸ Gen. 11:1-8, NIV.

¹⁹ Ex. 20:3, NIV.

When these lies are believed it means that the created human is saying, *'The image I am created after is not good, I need to change how I am created.'* This idolatry of the heart tears down the image God created each individual as and builds a new, false and broken image in its place.

The idol worship, whether images of self or physical objects of the world, is a battle that has been fought since the moment sin entered the world and will be a war until the heavens and earth will be made new at the end of time.²⁰ But God saw this broken system of the heart and put the story of redemption in motion. Though He saw time after time of idolatry and broken worship taking place, He wanted to create the opportunity for each person to find pure and humble worship once again. With a Messiah to save the world from its brokenness there would be an ever-growing problem in worship. Without the Holy Spirit to bring complete healing and restoration from those insecurities there would be a consistent self-idol worship taking place in the heart. There had to be a plan put in place for redeeming the earth.

Chapter 3: The Biblical Journey to a Renewed Creation

The plan for redemption is found through every page, chapter, verse, and story in scripture. God's faithful is seen through His redemptive works throughout history and in the incomprehensible gift of salvation. This salvation would only be available through the Messiah, so the plan was set for Jesus, the son of God, to come and bring freedom. This path set by God was to redeem the earth and all humanity back to the intended creation. God wanted each heart to be drawn to Him in perfect communion as He had with Adam and Eve in the garden. Along with each man and woman being freed from sin, God also wanted a plan in place for all of creation to

²⁰ Rev. 21:1, NIV.

be made free as well. This story arch of a messiah to redeem both humanity and the earth from sin is seen from cover to cover through the Bible.

The momentum of this story of the Messiah takes place with Abraham and his lineage after him. God chose Abraham to be the forefather for a great people that would come after him. The Lord said, “I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”²¹ Because of Abraham following God’s leading it provided a way for God’s blessing of a Messiah. Abraham had no clue that the Messiah would come from his family tree, but God through His grace sustained this family line through generations for the purpose of redeeming creation into the original state of worship.

The story of Abraham and his descendants is important to study and learn because the story is vital to see how the plan for the messiah Jesus was in the details throughout the Old Testament. The other area that is learned from this story is how worship developed throughout history, and that worship has been done with great purpose and meaning. The purpose and meaning behind the worship that took place all looked towards the fulfillment of Jesus bringing life back to the hardened dead hearts. Jesus brings life to the hearts that became hardened and dead because of sin. God was very intentional with His direction to Abraham. God wanted to make the promises He did to Abraham so that the modern church could look back and see that God’s plan for redemption was designed with keen detail and love.

²¹ Gen. 22:17-18, NIV.

When Abraham found that he became old and Sarah was now unable to bear children, it became evident to Abraham that he would not have a son with Sarah. Abraham and Sarah had three mysterious visitors come and visit them. These visitors from heaven told Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son. Though Sarah laughed to herself, they found that was God's promise came to be true. They had their only son, Isaac.²² With the promise of a son being fulfilled one would think that it would be enough of a prophetic insight for a coming Messiah, which it was, but God wanted to teach an important lesson for worshipers and generation to come. God asked Abraham to take Isaac up the mountain and sacrifice him. Abraham obeyed and made the trek to the mountain for the sacrifice. Abraham had faith that God would do something miraculous, even have Isaac come back to life, but even in the unknown Abraham followed. Before Abraham could slay Isaac an angel of the Lord stopped him from killing Isaac. God then provided a ram, stuck in a bush nearby, to take Isaac's place on the altar.²³

This story shows the gravity of Jesus' coming. Jesus, God's only son, sent to take the place of all humanity on the altar. When each person should be sacrificed for their sins, Jesus steps in, takes each sin and all transgressions, and dies in humanity's place. This story of course is a beautiful picture to understand God's heart of love for all mankind, but it is also essential for understanding worship in its fullest. Sacrificial worship was the primary way to worship God. A sacrifice of a lamb, goat, or ram would be the symbolic offering of one's gifts to seek forgiveness for sin and it was a way of giving praise to God the creator. When this story is seen as a piece of worship one will realize that the very act of worship is deeper than just the giving of

²² Gen. 18:1-15, 21:1-7, NIV.

²³ Gen. 22:1-19, ESV.

a piece of livestock, but the only way to have true salvation is giving a life to repay all sins. But no man could ever take that burden on for all mankind...except for Jesus.

As the generation went on after Abraham, God's promise of making his descendants as numerous as the stars became a reality. From Isaac came Jacob, and from Jacob the twelve tribes. The lineage of Abraham would give way to the coming of both the Mosaic Law for Israel and the one who would live the law perfectly, Jesus.²⁴ This lineage of Abraham would grow to such great numbers that Egypt became afraid of them and enslaved them for years to come. After years of slavery and pain, the people of Israel cried out for help. That is when Moses was called to help lead this massive people group to freedom.

The story of Moses and the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt is yet another incident where the details all point to towards Jesus, his sacrifice, his gift of freedom from sin, and how worship is affected by the perfect sacrifice. When the Israelites cried out for freedom from their bondage, God answered and sent Moses to free them. The symbol of Moses coming to save Israel from slavery is a prophetic symbol of Jesus coming to free all humanity from the slavery of sin.²⁵ Moses requested from Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, but Pharaoh "no" at each request. With each refusal God sent a plague to show His power and wonder. After nine plagues and nine declines to Moses' request, God had one last plague that would kill every first-born son in each household. God commanded each household of Israel to sacrifice a pure, spotless lamb and spread its blood on the doorposts of their houses. This command would save their firstborn sons. When the Angel of Death came over Egypt it passed over all the houses with the blood of the

²⁴ Hill, Andrew E. *Enter His Courts with Praise!* (Nashville, TN: Baker Publishing Group. 1993), 31.

²⁵ Hamilton, James M., *What is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns.* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 79.

lamb on the doors. Pharaoh's son died and that was the last plague for him to release the Israelites from their bondage.

Though at the time the Israelites may have not realized why they needed to put lambs' blood on their doors, but now one can see the importance of this act. It was a physical act that pointed towards the one true sacrifice of Jesus that would save all mankind from death. The importance of the blood sacrifice would be found all throughout history in preparation for Jesus' gift of his own life. He would be the one and only sacrifice, a perfect lamb with no sin, that could save all mankind from the slavery of sin. The Passover Lamb was the prophetic sacrificial symbol that Jesus would be the perfect sacrificial lamb who would provide the blood to have death pass over every heart that allows his blood to be on their lives. The sacrifice in worship was further established when God gave the commandments to Moses and Israel on the law of the offerings and sacrifices found in Leviticus chapters one through seven. These rules of offerings and sacrifices for sin are seen throughout the Old Testament in the tabernacle and then in the temple when it was built.²⁶

This God given law, including all the daily laws and the sacrificial laws, were tedious and could be seen as very burdensome. When one looks at the law from the contemporary viewpoint it can be difficult to understand why the law was setup the way it was and why it was important. When the law is compared next to the idea of God's heart for redemption in the heart of man then the themes of the law can be seen more clearly. The law must be seen as a gift from God, a road map for those who want to follow him to live in line with God's principles and core values.²⁷ This road map is to help guide the lost back to how one was created. God longs for

²⁶ Webber, Robert E., *Worship Old and New*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2009), 25.

²⁷ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 24.

hearts to follow his heart's desires. The law was a piece of the puzzle to drawing close once again to God's original design of worship.

When the attention is turned to Jesus in the New Testament and his explanation of the law one sees the more significant purpose for the law. "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."²⁸ The purpose for the law is to love God and love others. Worship is the act of loving God, but worship needs to also be in all the actions one shows to their neighbors. The law also pointed to the redeemer, Jesus. No one could follow the law perfectly. People could live out most of the law and follow all the rules, but the heart behind how they followed would not be in a true heart of love to God and to people. This can only come from a heart that is truly set free from sin. Only Jesus could live the law perfectly and free mankind from sin. Galatians chapter 2 states it well. "Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."²⁹

Jesus' gift of salvation opened the door to all humanity to walk freely into intimate communion with God the father. As Paul said while preaching in Pisidian Antioch, "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not

²⁸ Matt. 22:37-40, NIV.

²⁹ Gal. 2:16, NLT.

able to obtain under the law of Moses.”³⁰ The law was a guide to have a life of worship and adoration to God, but only Jesus could live it out for others to follow. Only Jesus could be a sacrifice to spare all mankind from death. John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching and proclaimed, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”³¹ John’s outburst is a mighty truth that was the prophetic statement declaring that Jesus had come to be one and only sacrifice to save all mankind from their sin. “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”³² Jesus was this perfect, spotless lamb for the needed sacrifice for all sin.

The story of God’s plan for redemption is laid out through the entire Old Testament. But it was all to look forward to the coming of Jesus. Sadly, by the time Jesus made it to the scene, many men and religious leaders had made their rules superior to the law. Making the law even more complicated to follow and more legalistic. The path towards redemption and the renewed creation would need to be discovered through Jesus’ fulfillment of God’s law not mankind’s law. The redemption of creation is found in the story from both Old and New testaments. The Old testament building the foundation for what Jesus would do, and the New Testament showing the one and only way to finding freedom as a new creation. In this condensed overview of the journey towards redemption there needs to be a summarized idea to take into the richness and depth of the story of Jesus the Messiah. Throughout all of the Old Testament there was always the redemptive and healing heart of God to be seen. God’s heart has always been set on each

³⁰ Acts 13:38-39, NIV.

³¹ John 1:29, ESV.

³² I Pet. 1:18-20, NIV.

individual heart to be freed from sin, healed and made whole from bondage, and to find peace and joy that the world cannot offer. This idea can be seen through His promises through Abraham and Israel, through the Mosaic Law, and through the covenantal worship of sacrifice. All pointing to the next step in the journey. The Messiah.

Chapter 4: A New Creation, The Redeemed Worshiper

After 400 years of silence people had lost their hope for a Messiah. There had been no prophetic words, no prophets to give hope, and the now the residence of Rome brought great turmoil and fear.³³ The traditions and keeping of the Jewish holidays were still in place, the Mosaic Law was still being followed, but the hope of the Messiah was for a great leader, warrior, and king to remove Rome from the face of the earth and bring freedom from the oppression that they were encountering. God's heart was to see these people, and the generations to come, to be free from oppression, but God's way of seeing oppression varies from man's way of seeing oppression. God wanted to give hope and healing from all eternity, not just a historical moment in time. God wanted liberty and freedom for all captives,³⁴ but God saw that captivity was in the heart and that sin was the problem. God wanted to give the opportunity to reset the individual heart back to the place of original design, back to the place of relationship with His father's heart.

To accomplish this task God had to send His son to step into a world filled with evil to bring the true goodness that only God provides. Sending His son is the perfect image of the Father, both man and spirit in one person. The son was at the beginning of time and knows how

³³ Gundry, Robert H., *A Survey of The New Testament: Fourth Edition*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 10.

³⁴ Luke 4:18, Is. 61:1, ESV.

the heart of man could be in right relationship with the father.³⁵ He saw the creation of man take place and he knew how the father had originated worship to function. In the letter to the Colossians Paul writes this description of Jesus, “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”³⁶ Jesus embodies the entirety of creation and everything that God created, including relationship and worship, was for Jesus.

Throughout scripture one can see that the writers, the disciples, and followers of Jesus understood that Jesus witnessed creation. Because of Jesus’ part in the trinity, he witnessed the very beginning of the universe. John wrote about Jesus being at the very beginning. He was the Word, and the Word was also God.³⁷ The writer of Proverbs also gives a prophetic glance at the idea of Jesus being at creation and his experience in seeing the universe being formed.

I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.³⁸

The power of Jesus’ purpose for coming to earth is found not in only His identity as God’s son, but in the physical gift in which He gave. His life-giving words brought new life to

³⁵ Noland, Rory, *The Worshiping Artist*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 93.

³⁶ Col. 1:15-17, NIV.

³⁷ John 1:1, ESV.

³⁸ Prov. 8:27-31, NIV.

the dying heart, but He also became the sacramental replacement for all humanity on the cross. His death took all sin, guilt, and shame. The death that mankind deserved was taken by God Himself. To give the fullness of life and to make the way for the human heart to become a true new creation for all eternity, Jesus came back to life. This is the definition of the gospel. The good news of Jesus giving himself in place for sin and rising from the dead. In the book of Philippians there is the summary of the gospel. “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”³⁹

After Jesus’ resurrection he promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ This companion through life is the life-giving Spirit that breathes fresh life into the individual spirit. The old heart that filled with sin, is now free to accept Jesus’ gift of new life. Becoming a new creation means that the heart can be like the creation from the beginning of time. The life-filled heart can now worship freely, without animal sacrifices or a priest, and step in God’s presence at any moment and at any place. This was how God wanted worship look like before sin, and the Holy Spirit gives mankind the tools to be that new creation. The Holy Spirit is the gift that strengthens with power in the inner most parts of the heart. Paul prayed this prayer over the church in Ephesus, “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being”⁴¹ That prayer can still be prayed today for each believer of Christ. For each

³⁹ Phil. 2:9-11, NIV.

⁴⁰ John 14:25, NIV.

⁴¹ Eph. 3:16, NIV.

individual to find the fullness and wholeness in their newly redeemed heart they will need the Holy Spirit to be empowered and to be strengthened.

In the New Testament, Paul makes another reference to this “new creation”. In his letter to Corinth he says, “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”⁴² The new creation of the redeemed heart is how the heart can worship God as if it were in the garden again. The intimacy God wants from mankind is the heart of genuine worship. This can only be found through Jesus’ gift of salvation and through believing in Jesus as the son of God who died for all sin. When the heart accepts this truth then the Holy Spirit reveals God’s truth and creates the heart into this new being. After the heart is made new then it changes the habits, the thinking, and behaviors, and the conversations, of the individual. It can be a lifetime journey to allow the Holy Spirit to heal and rewire the old behaviors, but there are now works or to-do lists that need to be accomplished on the person’s side to earn grace and freedom of God.⁴³

Romans 12:2 describes how the new heart should start thinking, “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”⁴⁴ God’s will is good, pleasing, and perfect. When the mind can be transformed from the old way of thinking, the worldly way of thinking, into the thoughts God has, then the new life is born. This is why Jesus describes salvation as being born again, Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I

⁴² II Cor. 5:16-17, NIV.

⁴³ Navarro, Kevin J, *The Complete Worship Leader*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 56.

⁴⁴ Rom 12:2, NLT.

say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”⁴⁵ It is truly as if the heart, mind, and soul is a new person. The old is no longer there and the new is born. It is in this state that worship can be pulled back onto the spiritual element that worship was meant to be established.

When applying the idea of the new creation and the redeemed life to worship one will find that it is the foundation to worshipping Jesus to the fullest. Before salvation the worship was built off the Law and the priest going into the Holy of Holies for the sinner. By Jesus taking that role of the priest for all mankind, he tore the veil that separated mankind from this intimate space with God.⁴⁶ This opportunity to step into the holy place with God was the opportunity needed to walk with God once again as in the garden, and this opportunity was not just for the Jews but for all humanity. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, she said, ““Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus replied, ‘Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.’”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ John 3:5-6, ESV.

⁴⁶ Matt. 27:51, NIV.

⁴⁷ John 4:20-24, NLT.

With Jesus' gift of salvation, the heart can worship in spirit and in truth. The new creation is given the opportunity to step into the holy place every day in the Spirit and worship God the father. Though the world that is surrounding may still be in an evil and sinful state, God gave each individual the miraculous opportunity to find the original created, garden type of relationship in their everyday life. He gives the opportunity to know Him which builds trust in the relationship. This relationship is what He wants. One writer says that "We worship whom we trust, and we trust whom we know."⁴⁸ The story has not finished yet. Jesus will return and set the world back into its right order, creating a new heaven and earth. Creation itself will be redeemed, but now is the time to learn that the heart can step into the spiritual place of redemption before the heavens and earth can find the same place. Worship is now a personal experience for every individual that accepts the gospel truth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Chapter 5: The Renewed, Eternal Creation

The story of redemption will continue when Jesus returns. This path of redeeming the creation is still in motion. This look towards the future of worship is founded in the history of the Bible and the gospel of Jesus.⁴⁹ Jesus has given sanctification of the heart to be made new already, but the day will come that there will be a new heaven and new earth. John, the last surviving disciple was given the revelation of things to come. He wrote:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes.

⁴⁸ Jeremiah, David, *My Heart's Desire*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 165.

⁴⁹ Walters, J. Michael, *Can't Wait for Sunday*, (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House. 2006), 213.

There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”⁵⁰

This new heaven and earth are described here as a place where the old way of sin is no more. There will be no pain, or tears, and no more death. Death comes in two different forms. The spiritual death and the physical death. One can see that Jesus destroyed the spiritual death already. “‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁵¹ Death no longer has victory because of Jesus’ gift of spiritual life. However, in the new heaven and new earth there will no longer be any physical pain or death.⁵² Jesus’ gift of spiritual life is the first step towards the eternal creation being redeemed with life because sin will be defeated once and for all. It was defeated on the cross, but Jesus will still redeem the remaining inhabitants of evil from the earth. John also saw this take place in his revelation. He says, “and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”⁵³

After heaven and earth are redeemed and evil is done away with, then the eternal worship will be back to God’s original design. If one compares the life that was meant to be lived in the garden of Eden to the life one will live in eternity, it changes all the pictures and ideas of what heaven looks like in the mind. Many people have said that heaven sounds boring because who would want to sit around on clouds playing harps in white robes. The worship that will take place

⁵⁰ Rev. 21:1-4, NIV.

⁵¹ I Cor. 15:55-57, NIV.

⁵² I Cor. 15:35-44, NIV.

⁵³ Rev. 20:10, ESV.

in eternity will be like nothing else seen by human eyes, and beyond that, God will love to see mankind live as He created them to live. God intended the earth to be inhabited by his creation, He told them to go produce and create, and that is what He wants mankind to do still in the new heaven and earth.

The human mind even now with evil and sin, is a brilliant organism that God intended to be creative. Imagine a perfect earth with no sin and everything that man creates is for God's glory. That would mean that artists, painters and musicians, orchestras and performers, would all be creating for the glory of God's praise. Imagine scientists and explorers not being limited to a single lifetime of study. They would be able to live an eternity exploring the universe God created for them. Writers, architects, athletes, philosophers, thinkers, public speakers, the list can go on and on. All these creative outlets that God put into each heart would only be multiplied into a perfect form of worship. That heaven does not sound boring any longer.

The most important part of the worship in eternity is drawing close to God once again. He can walk with mankind in perfect unity and love as He did in the garden with Adam and Eve. This intimate relationship is available now for those who accept the gift through Jesus' sacrifice, but there will still be the next level of depth to walk in perfect peace with God.⁵⁴ With no sin, shame, guilt, condemnation, or pain to hinder the experience with God. This worship will be the most spectacular worship one could ever experience with God, and it is open for all humanity to join in this worship. There is no divide between people groups or ages in eternity, which means there should be none on earth even now.

⁵⁴ Tozer, A. W., *Worship: The Reason We Were Created-Collected Insights from A. W. Tozer*, Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2017. 28

One can see the worship that God loves in the Revelation of John. He saw all nations, tribes, and tongues worship in unity. “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’”⁵⁵ Worship in the newly redeemed creation will be all the nations lifting up God above all other names. It is evident that these are various people groups because it says that they are from “every nation, tribe, people and language”.⁵⁶ With the eyes one can see their race and with the ears one can hear their language. This is beautiful worship to God, and He looks forward to the day that all will be set right as the eternal creation.

Conclusion

This compact overview of the creation story throughout history is just a brief glance at the depth of how God designed worship to look. The original creation was perfect and how God intended life to be, but sin damaged the heart, mind, and soul, making worship a difficult hurdle to understand rather than an intimate relationship. Throughout scripture one can see that God set a plan in place to redeem all mankind, but it was a long journey before Jesus took all sin on the cross. Currently, the modern church is in the middle of this story. The church is currently able to live in the freedom of Jesus’ gift of salvation, and the church is hopefully working diligently to fulfill what Jesus commanded when he ascended. “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have

⁵⁵ Rev. 7:9-10, NIV.

⁵⁶ Rev. 7:9, NIV.

commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”⁵⁷ As the church is working on fulfilling Jesus’ command there can be the joy of knowing that the story is continuing. This calling from Jesus to evangelize is the true purpose of the church.⁵⁸ Jesus will return and redeem the entire earth and all of heaven. The eternal worship is what the church is preparing for now and should not stop evangelizing until Jesus’ return.⁵⁹

The thoughts on the creation story scripture and history can be wonderfully philosophical and theologically deep, but there is practical application to pull from these ideas. To know and understand how powerful it is to be a new creation changes the daily habits, decisions, and characteristics of the individual who has let the Holy Spirit do His work on the heart. The first area that is affected by this newly transformed heart is the personal quiet times of worship, prayer, and scripture reading.⁶⁰ One may find it difficult to have quiet time with God if their lives are not completely transformed by Jesus. This comes from many disconnections between the individual and God the Father. However, even if they are able to have a daily routine of scripture reading, prayer, and worship it may seem lacking in passion and excitement. The power of realizing the importance of being a new creation by the gift of Jesus’s blood should create a passion, excitement, and motivation in each personal life of worship. This idea transforms the personal quiet time into a thriving time of intimate worship.⁶¹ If one could filter their values, habits, leadership qualities, goals, calendar, and their budgets with the idea of the eternal worship

⁵⁷ Matt. 28:18b-20, NIV.

⁵⁸ Wheeler, David and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group. 2011), 11.

⁵⁹ Harlow, Tim, *Life on Mission*, (Rancho Santa Margarita, CA: Pastors.com. 2014), 146.

⁶⁰ Foster, Richard J., *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2018), 171.

⁶¹ Phifer, Stephen, *More Than Music: Becoming a Highly Effective Worship Team*, (Millry, AL: Empowered Publications Inc. 2018), 137.

as new creations then it would change every aspect of their life. The life that is driven by the power of the gospel is a life that forsakes the things of the world.⁶²

The second major piece of life that will be affected by receiving the new creation mentality is in the church as a whole.⁶³ In a corporate setting of worship there can be various distractions for each attending. These distractions can be a giant hindrance when trying to worship as a community. Whether those distractions are in the room; the lyrics are not working on the screens, the sound equipment is faulty, the worship leader forgets the words, or a church attendee may make a scene in the sanctuary. Or the distraction is internal; the week had been difficult at work, they just had an argument before coming to church, or they are thinking about what needs done when they return home in the afternoon. All of these distractions scatter the thoughts during worship from the true purpose of worship, which is Jesus. If the hearts of the worshiping community could prepare in their thoughts and in their hearts what worship looks like eternally then the atmosphere of the corporate church would be radically changed.⁶⁴

Looking back at the scripture from Revelation 7, one sees the eternal worship as being united in spirit for the sole purpose of worshiping the one true God worthy of all praise. The hinderances of social issues, racial issues, generational issues, and many more all disappear in the presence of God. The unity of true worshiping hearts can include all ages and all nationalities. The distractions of this world fade away and worship becomes a genuine act of praise. The heart of the “new creation” is one that understands that the light of Jesus’ love overcomes all darkness in the heart, mind, and soul. Complete healing and transformation can

⁶² Platt, David, *Counter Culture*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2017), 23.

⁶³ Cherry, Constance M., *The Worship Architect*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 2010), 55.

⁶⁴ Whaley, Vernon M., *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*, (Virginia Beach, VA: Academx Publishing Services, Inc., 2009), 161.

occur in the person's life, and daily they can walk in an intimate relationship with the Father. Just as God spoke "let there be light" at the beginning of creation, even now He can speak light into the heart of the sinner and destroy the darkness of sin. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ John 1:4-5, ESV.

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