

An Old Song, a New Song

The Song of Creation

Not this “song of the universe”:

I like to believe that there is a song to the universe. That beyond the daily hustle and bustle, there is a tune to which life is playing, and that our task is to learn the rhythm of the Divine plan and fall into step with it. You can see when someone is in sync with the song. You can see it on their face, in their eyes, the way they talk, the way they lead their life. These individuals have the strongest faith; they don't live in doubt, they have nothing to fear. They radiate joy; they are happy people.¹

C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* – Aslan sings the world into place.

All Creation Sings

Job 38:4-11 *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements- surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?"*

God Made It; God Controls It

- Idols are worthless: God is glorious and “**weighty**”

Jeremiah 10:3-8 *the customs of the peoples are vanity. A tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move. Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good. There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might. Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your due; for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like you. They are both stupid and foolish; the instruction of idols is but wood!*

- Idols are mute: God's **word** brought creation into existence:

“let there be light and there was light.”

- Idols cannot hear: God **hears** our prayers

Deut. 4:7 *What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him?*

- Idols are impotent to save: God **comes** himself to save us.

¹ http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/926310/jewish/The-Song-of-the-Universe.htm

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Isaiah 59:16-17 *He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.*

- Idols are created by someone else: God is **uncreated**.

Harold Bloom: *“I am uncreated, as old as God.”*

the so-called Christian mystic, the Dominican Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) says there is *“something in the soul that is uncreated and uncreatable.”*

This is the heart of paganism.

The earth itself and the beauty of nature tempt some people into a dream of an ecological and spiritual utopia, in which humanity rises to a new level, getting rid of all authoritarian and patriarchal structures. Aldous Huxley, who wrote *Brave New World* also wrote *Island* (1962), a utopian novella depicting a people that seeks ecological balance and the development of higher consciousness through meditation and the use of non-addictive psychedelic drugs.” It shouldn’t surprise us that people want to worship the earth—even when they cut God out of the picture, they still sense his glory and majesty in his creation. It elicits a sense of awe and worship.

And how ironic that the very apex of God’s creation—human beings, made in his image—are those most hated, mistreated, slaughtered and tortured! We have everything upside-down, valuing the life of a gnat over those of human beings—outraged by Assad’s use of chemical weapons while we tear to shreds one and a half million of our own offspring in our clinics every year!

The Earth Waits for God’s Salvation

Groaning and waiting

Romans 8:19-23 *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

The Earth Is Established

Our ecological problem is not so much plastic bags as the pollution of human sin.

Hosea 4:1-3 *the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, and even the fish of the sea are taken away.*

The Song of the Nations

The God of all the Earth

All nations, all “families of the peoples” must:

- Recognize and worship him as the only true god

Deuteronomy 32:39 *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.*

Deuteronomy 32:6 *Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?*

- Know his qualities and characteristics

Romans 1:18-23 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.*

- Bow down to him alone

Romans 14:10-11 *we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."*

Exodus 23:24 *you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces.*

- Receive His salvation

Psalm 96:8 *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!*

But many refuse this invitation:

Romans 1:21-26 *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions.*

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The Song of God's People

Old Song to God the Creator

God is to be:

Praised (v. 4, 7, 10)

Feared (v. 4)

Worshiped and served (vv. 8, 9)

Enjoyed (vv. 1, 2)

Shared! (sing, declare, ascribe, tell)

New Song to God the Savior

God's Salvation has come!

God Sings Over Us

Zephaniah 3:14-17 *Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.*

Jesus Sings among Us and through Us

Our song is new throughout the ages, because his mercies are new every morning, to every believer, in every country.

We Sing His Praises Daily

- His glory, splendor and majesty (vv 3, 6, 7)
- His works (vv 3, 11-13)
- His awe (vv. 4, 9, 10)
- His name (v 8)
- His justice (vv 10, 13)
- His power to create (v 5)
- His power to reign (v 7, 8, 10)
- His holiness,(separateness, purity (v 9)
- His open courts (come!) (v. 8)
- His salvation (v 2, 8)
- The joy he brings us (vv. 11-13)

Isaiah 55:11-12 *so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I*

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sent it. "For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

We Will Sing in God's Heavenly Assembly

Revelation 15:2-3 *I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!"*

Questions:

1. Are there qualities of God in Psalm 96 that you forget to talk about when you talk to the "nations"?
2. In what ways are you aware of God's new mercies every day? How can you talk about them to your family and friends?
3. Can you think of a time when God "rejoiced over you with gladness," "quieted you with his love" or "exulted over you with loud singing?" Why do you think it is so hard to believe this last statement?

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