

April 17, 2005 AM

DAY 3: LAND, SEA AND VEGETATION (PART 1)
GENESIS 1:9-13

1. SEPARATION OF WATER AND LAND (9-10)

A. THE WORD OF HIS POWER (9A)

“and God said” - by the word of God this came to be. The Word of God in Creation is our confidence concerning the Word of God in redemption. This Word was made flesh.

God’s unconquerable Word will bring the world to its proper conclusion ... “and it was so.”

The call of Creation is the call to faith in God’s word. For this is the God who speaks into nothing and makes it something simply by the word of his power.

B. ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES (9B)

Receding waters: Day 3 is finishing up what God began on Day 2.

“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear”: several facts - (1) the planet is dominated by water in the initial creation of God up to the third day. (2) Land is a part of the initial creation but just not seen. (3) Solid substance seems to be at the bottom of these waters. Some of this solid substance sinks so that the waters run off the land that does not sink.

God’s authority: naming the (literally) *dry* “Earth” or “Land” and the gathered waters he names “Seas.”

The covenantal nature of creation - God is dividing and putting back into proper relation.

God establishes the relationship between the sea and the land by establishing boundaries for the seas. Each has a proper place.

Establishing boundaries for the waters: certainly a display of the power of God over the mighty waters that would always seek to overtake the land if it could. (Cf. “boundaries for the sea”: **Job 38:8-11; Jer 5:22**).

Proper relationships: Boundaries also declare that there is a proper relationship between land and sea; a theme of redemptive history (i.e., God’s putting the creation back into proper relationship with himself).

Land themes: Remember what Creation is and what it is not. Creation is *not* God’s hobby.

Creation *is* God’s building a house for his name in which he will dwell with his people and be their God. His purposes in creating *what* he created and *how* he created it are not arbitrary but deliberate.

Scripture interprets Scripture: when Scripture uses imagery elsewhere, Scripture is interpreting itself.

The land, for example, becomes a major theme that permeates and, in many ways, defines what is going on in redemptive history.

The land that God creates is to be ruled over by man as God’s vice-regent for the glory of God (**Gen 1:26**). The starting point of this activity would be the Garden of Eden, the Temple of God on earth. This is the place where God and man would commune.

Man is to be fruitful and multiply filling the earth/land and subduing it. The entrance of sin corrupts this dominion activity. The land now is being dominated by the serpent and his seed.

Redemption involves the reestablishment of Eden, the house of God, and from that house all the land is to be filled and subdued for God’s glory. The promise concerning the land and the redemptive significance of the land comes into sharp focus with Abraham whom God promises to give the land (cf. **Gen 12:1-3**).

But it would be a mistake to think that the little land along the Mediterranean was the full intention of God’s promise. The land of Canaan was the “down payment” and the means through which all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

God will *concentrate* his plan upon Israel as the ones in whom sin will be dealt with and promises for the world will be realized. God does what he does for Israel and through Israel for the world. Land is part of that concentration. The land will be the place where the problem of sin and God’s promises will be concentrated. Once sin is dealt with in the small bit of land, the promise will

be realized in the whole earth/land or all the lands.

Israel and Israel's coming Tabernacle/Temple will be the new Garden from which all the earth will be subdued. That concentration on Israel becomes a concentration on Israel's king as Israel's embodiment and representative. Jesus, as the King of the Jews, takes upon himself the sin of the world, dealing with the problem of sin so that in him all the promises of God can be and are "Yes" and "Amen" (**2Cor 1:20**).

Division of land and sea: This third day of Creation imagery is used especially in the OT concerning God dividing Gentiles—the sea with its creatures—from his people—the land. Division of land and sea: God's people separated from the nations.

The sea and its creatures (e.g., Leviathan) are always a threat to the people of God. But God will slay the dragon that is in the sea (**Isa 27:1**; cf. also **60:5**; and **Rev 13:1**).

In Jesus we have the nations being subdued and blessed. Gospels written with this background in mind. Cf. e.g., **Mark 4:35–5:20**; **Matt 8:23–34**; going across and stilling the sea and bringing the healing to Gentiles.

New heavens and the new earth: **Revelation 21:1**, "... and the sea was no more." (Cf. also **Rev 5:9**)

Just like all of God's creative activity which tells the story, so the division of land and sea is eschatological in nature. I.e., the division of the land and sea looks for a proper ending, a time when everything is right and mature.

God's people and the land: God's people as being people of the land also concerns the *means* of redemption. Cf. **Isa 51:10**, the Exodus.

The dry land becomes the means of deliverance and the sign of deliverance for the people of God. But for the enemies of God, the sea sweeps them away in judgment.

C. GOD NAMES THE TWO ENTITIES (10)

Back to the original day 3. The evaluation of his work: and God saw that it was good. Not said on Day 2.

D. GOD JUDGES THE DIVISION (10)

Nature of the good creation: "Good": don't get the misconception that "good" means "complete" in the sense of "having come to utmost maturity."

Man is put on the earth as God's representative to and for creation. Man is to develop an undeveloped creation.

For instance, we read in Genesis 2:5 that some vegetation had not yet sprouted because it had not rained and there was no man to till the ground. Creation was good, but it was not yet "complete" or "mature." Man's vocation in the world was to bring the creation to this mature point.

This is why things can be said pertaining to the sea and the land being divided as being good, but it also looks for its proper ending or conclusion.

Application (1): There is a proper relationship between the people of God and the "nations."

First, there is that aspect of division between us and the "nations" which speaks about our *holiness*. That is, we are set apart by God and for God. There are boundaries in our mixing and mingling with those who are not of us.

This separation is not separation unto isolation. Our separation is tied up in our being a light to the nations.

Application (2): The boundaries of the sea have been set.

We can be assured that the sea will not over come the land (at least not again like it did in the flood). God has set the boundaries of the sea.

The picture that arises throughout the course of redemptive history is that the sea will be overcome. It will not overcome.