

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF CREATION CONCEPTS AND THEMES IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

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This descriptive analysis provides a comprehensive and wholistic view of Creation in the Book of Psalms. It is viewed in the background of the rest of the Creation material found in the Old Testament and the ancient Near Eastern religious records. Hermeneutics and analytic induction have helped to create a synthesis of major concepts and themes about Creation.

After an introductory overview of the three categories of documents (chap. 1), a literature review on the Psalms (chap. 2) analyzes eleven major studies on Creation, followed by seven studies of individual Psalms and five minor studies. None of these provide a comprehensive, wholistic treatment of Creation.

Ancient Near Eastern views of the Creation (chap. 3) include Egyptian (Memphite, Heliopolitan, and other) as well as Mesopotamian sources (Sumerian, Babylonian, Canaanite/Ugaritic). Nine authorities touch upon similar themes in varying degrees of emphasis: perfection and redemption, rulership and sovereignty, creativity and generativity, clashes of forces and conquests, protection and providence, proclamation and praise.

The discussion of Old Testament Creation is not limited to the Psalms and includes passages and poetry in Genesis, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos as well as other minor references. Common themes are the earth's origin, creation of humans, deliverance, salvation, separation and reconciliation, beginnings and endings, undoing and restoration (apocalyptic and eschatological).

Creation themes within the Psalms include the unique role of Yahweh as Creator and Redeemer of Israel (chap. 5). Of the nine major Psalms with Creation ideas, Pss 8, 33, 104, and 148 are particularly relevant to the establishment of Israel. Minor Creation statements in other Psalms are also reviewed. In a panorama, the received text of each Psalm in its final form displays a major theme which leaps forward to the next, presenting an organic and unified theology. God and humanity are linked in Creation, with a reciprocal expression of feelings. *Hesed* is God's "loving-kindness" to Israel. Yahweh is Israel's deliverer, protector, redeemer. He rebukes those who interfere with Israel.

The outcomes of this study have obtained a wholistic Creation theology with a blending of the programmatic and prophetic picture of Creation as a result. Several concepts and themes have merged together to form a greater view of Creation which includes God, world, humanity, history, future, and eschatology. The understanding of archetypes and their cosmic relationships needs further investigation. There are still many individual concepts which need a closer look. Each theme holds promise for more intensive research and appreciation. The unity and diversity among the multifarious themes of Creation in all the ancient Near Eastern religious traditions may require continuous investigations in the years ahead.