

## CREATION AND THE THEOLOGY OF RELATIONSHIP AS A FUNDAMENTAL THEME IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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### Abstract

This article explores creation and the theology of the God-Humanity-Creation relationship in the Old Testament, highlighting key elements such as the theology of perichoresis, the origin of the human body from the earth (*adamah*, אָדָמָה), and the state of creation before and after humanity's fall. It also examines the consequences of communal transgression and God's promise of restoration. By employing qualitative hermeneutical methods through biblical text analysis and theological literature studies, this study affirms that the work of restoration is a divine initiative aimed at re-establishing harmonious relationships between humanity, creation, and the Creator. This research offers new insights into the significance of restoration within the framework of creation and humanity's responsibility as stewards of creation, while also presenting hope for the renewal of all creation. The conclusion of this study emphasises that the restoration of the God-Humanity-Creation relationship in the Old Testament is a divine initiative intended to restore the harmony of creation following humanity's fall. By highlighting the concept of the theology of perichoresis, the origin of humanity from the earth (אָדָמָה, *adamah*), and the impact of the fall on creation, this research asserts that restoration is not merely a promise but an ongoing part of God's plan. Moreover, this study underscores humanity's role as stewards of creation and provides theological insights into the hope of renewal for all creation in light of God's redemptive work.

**Keywords:** God, creation, humanity, environment, theology of relationships.

### INTRODUCTION

Creation and the theology of the God-Human-Nature relationship are crucial themes within the Old Testament, which not only address the origins of the world and humanity but also reveal the profound connections between God, humans, and the natural world. This study places emphasis on the theology of perichoresis, which describes the essence and existence of God before creation. This concept illustrates how God interacts in an intimate and dynamic relationship within the Trinity, forming the foundation for our understanding of creation and His work in the world.

The study of humanity in the context of creation also remains a primary focus. Humans, created in the image of God, have the calling to participate in the work of creation and the stewardship of the natural world. By considering the origin of the earth (אָדָמָה, *adamah*) that constitutes the body of humanity, this article underscores the importance of the relationship between humans and the earth. The ground is not merely a physical medium but also a symbol of identity and existence before God.

Before the fall of humanity, creation operated in balance and harmony, reflecting God's perfect plan. The well-being and beauty of creation mirror the goodness of God. Thus,

understanding the state of nature prior to the fall is crucial for comprehending the consequences of the transgression committed by humanity. Through this exploration, the article examines the impact of sin on the relationship between humans and creation, resulting in injustice and disharmony in the world.

In this context, the article investigates how human transgression not only disrupts the vertical relationship between humanity and God but also the horizontal relationship between humans, nature, and communities. The consequences of this transgression lead to alienation for both individuals and communities, creating new challenges in societal life.

Furthermore, the article discusses the state of nature following the fall of humanity, which has experienced degradation and decline. Nature bears witness to human transgression and faces the ramifications of sin. With this understanding, readers are invited to reflect on how God continues to work throughout history, even amidst suffering and difficulties resulting from the fall.

The promise of God's restoration culminates this discussion. In His work of restoration, God invites humanity to return to Him and engage in the process of restoration. This restoration is not merely individual but also collective, encompassing all creation that yearns for a return to a state of goodness. Through this promise, humanity is called to participate in a broader effort of restoration that reflects God's love and justice.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the theology of perichoresis, creation, and restoration within the context of the Old Testament, particularly in the Book of Genesis, which contains the beginnings of life in the Garden of Eden. This study offers a new perspective by tracing the intrinsic relationship between the essence of God and the existence of humanity and nature. With a holistic approach, this article seeks to illustrate how an understanding of creation and the theology of relationships serves not only as a historical narrative but also as a call to action in contemporary contexts.

The exploration of creation theology within this study necessitates a qualitative approach, particularly one grounded in hermeneutical analysis. A hermeneutical framework is essential for interpreting biblical texts within their historical, cultural, and theological contexts, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the intricate themes of creation, fall, and restoration (Gadamer, 1975, p. 273). This method enables the examination of scriptural narratives beyond their literal meanings, uncovering theological insights that inform the broader discourse on divine relationality and human responsibility.

A critical analysis of Old Testament texts, particularly the creation narrative in Genesis, serves as a foundational aspect of this research. The study delves into the depiction of humanity's relationship with the earth (*adamah*, אֲדָמָה) and its theological implications, as well as the consequences of the fall on both human existence and the natural world. Furthermore, the study integrates perspectives from theological literature to enrich the discussion, drawing upon key scholarly contributions that illuminate the interwoven relationship between God, humanity, and creation (Brueggemann, 1977, p. 61; Eichrodt, 1961, p. 235).

By synthesising biblical exegesis with theological reflection, this study aims to construct a comprehensive argument regarding the significance of creation theology. This approach not only highlights the depth of scriptural teachings on creation and restoration but also provides a framework for understanding these themes within contemporary theological discourse. The methodological considerations outlined here serve as a basis for the structured research design, which will be further detailed in the following section on research methodology.

Ultimately, by highlighting the complexity and depth of the relationships between God, humanity, and nature, this article makes a significant contribution to contemporary theological discourse. This research invites readers to reconsider their position in God's work of creation and

to cultivate an awareness of the moral and spiritual responsibilities involved in caring for and restoring the created world.

In Old Testament theology, creation is not merely a physical or mechanical process but an act that expresses the essence of God's love and enduring presence (Von Rad, 1962, p. 140). This relationship, reflecting the perichoresis within the Trinity, serves as the ideal model of relationality within creation (Eichrodt, 1961, p. 96).

The creation of humanity from the earth (*אָדָמָה*, *adamah*) underscores a profound bond between humankind and the natural world (Brueggemann, 1977, p. 3). This concept affirms that humans are an integral part of the created order and hold a responsibility towards it (Kaiser, 1983, p. 125).

The Fall, as recounted in Genesis, introduces far-reaching ecological consequences, symbolising the impact of sin that disrupts creation's harmony (Eichrodt, 1961, p. 187). Humanity's relationship with nature is likewise affected, signifying an imbalance in relationships damaged by sin (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 45).

Restoration emerges as a central theme in Old Testament creation theology, wherein God endeavours to restore creation to its intended goodness (Von Rad, 1965, p. 143). This promise of restoration invites humankind to return to God and engage in His work of renewal (Kaiser, 1978, p. 235).

A hermeneutical approach to creation theology provides a deeper insight into the relationship between God, humanity, and nature (Brueggemann, 1977, p. 61). This approach broadens our understanding of humanity's relationship with the natural world and the community within the context of creation (Eichrodt, 1961, p. 235).

Through this integrative perspective, creation theology is recognised as holding not only theological significance but also practical relevance within a contemporary framework, urging humanity to take an active role as stewards of creation (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 76).

## METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method with a hermeneutical approach to biblical texts. This method was chosen as it allows the researcher to explore and understand the profound meanings of sacred texts and the historical, cultural, and theological contexts behind them. Hermeneutics, as the art and science of interpreting texts, provides a space for richer analysis of the meanings contained within the narratives of creation, the fall, and restoration found in the Bible (Gadamer, 1975, p. 273).

The first step in this hermeneutical process involves reading and critically analysing relevant biblical texts, particularly from the Old Testament, which include the creation narrative in the Book of Genesis, reflections on the state of nature before and after the fall, and the promise of restoration. At this stage, the researcher endeavours to understand the key words and phrases in their original language (Hebrew) to capture nuances of meaning that may be lost in translation. This analysis also takes into account the literary and theological contexts, as well as the interaction between the text and tradition (Walton, 2011, p. 42).

Furthermore, this research also involves a literature review of theological books and academic articles related to the themes of creation, the theology of the God-Human-Nature relationship, the fall, and restoration. These sources include the works of prominent theologians that discuss concepts such as the theology of *perichoresis*, the relationship between God and creation, and the theological consequences of human transgression (Brueggemann, 1997, p. 61; Eichrodt, 1985, p. 235). By examining various theological perspectives and interpretations, the researcher can broaden their understanding and provide a wider context for the themes being discussed.

The combination of biblical hermeneutics and theological literature study enables the researcher to construct coherent and in-depth arguments, contributing significantly to the understanding of creation theology and the God-Human-Nature relationship within the context of the Old Testament. This method is expected to reveal novel insights in this research and provide new, relevant perspectives for contemporary theological discussions (Wright, 2013, p. 78).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Theology of Perichoresis (περιχώρησις): The Essence and Existence of God Before Creation**

Theology of Perichoresis (περιχώρησις) reveals the concept of the essence and existence of God within the Trinitarian fellowship—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—that was actively present before creation. In this view, God does not appear as an isolated singular individual but as a divine community communicating in harmony and unity. The Trinity reflects an essence that is inherently communal, where communication and community are eternal intrinsic qualities. Although the term “Trinity” does not appear in the Tanakh, the idea of communicative unity is evident in texts that depict the internal dialogue of God. For instance, Genesis 1:26 employs the plural form in the statement, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” The term *נַאֲשֵׁה* (*na'aseh*, "let us make") signifies a collective dimension, indicating that the act of creation is performed in personal unity (Brueggemann, 1997, p. 60). This plural expression has been widely discussed in theological discourse, with interpretations ranging from a reflection of the divine council to an intra-Trinitarian dialogue, both of which highlight the relational aspect of God's creative work (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 98). The use of *נַאֲשֵׁה* /*na'aseh* underscores the idea that creation is not an isolated or arbitrary act but rather a deliberate and relational process that reflects the inherent unity and purpose within the divine being. This understanding reinforces the theological significance of creation as a manifestation of divine intentionality, relationality, and order, shaping how humanity perceives its role and responsibility within the created world.

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Moreover, Isaiah 48:16 further clarifies the Trinitarian perspective in divine sending: “And now the Lord God has sent me and His Spirit.” Here, the sending implies a unity of God that maintains personal diversity within collective action, reinforcing the inseparable cooperation within the Trinitarian community (Brueggemann, 1997, p. 28).

The concept of Perichoresis (περιχώρησις) suggests that Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) is a community that interacts in perfect love and harmony. This intimacy indicates that each Person—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—actively contributes to the same work while maintaining their distinct identities. Through the principle of Perichoresis (περιχώρησις), creation becomes a reflection of an inclusive and dynamic divine community, where humanity is invited to participate in that relationship, embodying the harmony and love that emanate from the essence of God (Moltmann, 1981, p. 149).

In the context of the theology of Perichoresis (περιχώρησις), the essence and existence of God as a Trinitarian community not only reveal the internal relationship of God but also provide a profound understanding of the purpose of creation. God creates not out of external need but as an expression of love and fellowship flowing from the communion within the Trinity. The

existence of humanity as the image and likeness of God becomes a calling to enter into divine relationship, making human life a reflection of a harmonious community that emphasises collaboration, diversity, and unity in the loving divine purpose (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 158).

This concept asserts that the Trinity is not merely an abstract theory but a model of the ideal community presented by God to humanity. As the image of God, humanity is called to live in a community that reflects divine love, justice, and harmony, fulfilling the purpose instilled by God within them since creation.

### Humanity in the Context of Creation

Humanity, in the context of creation, plays a profoundly central role in the theology concerning the origins and purpose of life. In the creation of humankind, God bestows a special place through two deeply significant terms: “image” (תְּצַלֵּם, *selem*) and “likeness” (דְּמוּת, *dēmût*), which portray humanity as a reflection of the nature and character of God (Kaiser, 2000). The term “likeness” (דְּמוּת, *dēmût*) signifies a resemblance in qualities or attributes between humanity and the Creator, whereas “image” (תְּצַלֵּם, *selem*) refers more specifically to the manifest image or representation of God in human existence. In this context, humanity is created as a unique entity comprising male (אִישׁ, *ish*) and female (אִשָּׁה, *isha*), each carrying specific aspects in the reflection of the divine image (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 54). This distinction does not imply hierarchy but rather complementarity, where both male and female equally bear the *Imago Dei* and participate in God's creative purpose (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 112). The creation of humanity in duality underscores the relational nature of human existence, emphasizing cooperation, mutual dependence, and shared responsibility in fulfilling the divine mandate. Thus, the formation of humanity as *ish* and *isha* highlights the inherent dignity and purpose of both genders, reinforcing their role in reflecting God's image and stewarding creation in harmony.

The design of creation asserts that there exists no concept of alternative genders aside from male and female. *Ish* (אִישׁ) and *isha* (אִשָּׁה) are not merely partners but possess a “unique compatibility” and “exclusive sexual expression” that affirm their complementary relationship (Von Rad, 1972, p. 21). This is elucidated in Genesis 2:24, which states, “Therefore shall a man (אִישׁ) leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife (אִשָּׁה), and they shall be one flesh” (*basar echad*, בָּשָׂר אֶחָד). This declaration highlights the profound meaning of the union between male and female, which is not solely physical but also emotional and spiritual. Thus, the relationship between male and female in the context of creation underscores the principles of harmony and deep interconnection, serving as a foundation for the establishment of a healthy community.

As beings created in the image of God, humans are endowed with the capacity to think, feel, and will. This ability allows humanity to partake in a harmonious relationship with the Creator and all His creations. This is also evident in the mandate given to humanity to manage and cultivate creation, as outlined in Genesis 2:15: “And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (*le'āvedāh u-le'shamrāh*, לְעַבְדָּהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָה) (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 132). Here, humanity does not merely act as a ruler but also as a partner with God in maintaining the balance and beauty of nature. Consequently, the creation of humanity affirms the importance of solidarity with fellow creation and the responsibility to preserve the earth as a shared home.

The concept of *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) in the Bible beautifully illustrates the relationship between male and female as partners who support and complement each other. This term is first employed in the context of creation, where God states that it is not good for man to be alone. Thus, woman is created as a “helper suitable” for man, yet likewise, man is expected to be an equal helper for woman (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 57). This concept refers to the equality and

compatibility that enrich one another, enabling both to work together towards a common goal as 'ādām (אָדָם), or humanity.

As beings created in the image of God, humans possess the capacity to think, feel, and will, and can participate in harmonious relationships (communicating, sharing in community) with God and His creation. This responsibility is evident in the mandate to manage and care for creation, as written in Genesis 2:15, "And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (לְעִבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ, *le'āvedāh u-le'shamrāh*), where humanity acts not only as a ruler but also as a partner with God in preserving the beauty and balance of nature. Thus, the creation of humanity demonstrates the importance of solidarity and interconnectedness with fellow creatures.

In relation to the above, the concept of *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) in the Bible depicts the relationship between male and female as complementary and supportive partners. This term appears in the context of creation, where God creates woman as a “helper” or “partner” for man; likewise, man serves as a “helper” or “partner” for woman as fellow human beings (אָדָם, 'ādām). Genesis 2:18 states, “And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an *ezer* (עֵזֶר) *kenegdo* (כְּנֶגְדּוֹ).” The term *ezer* (עֵזֶר) signifies “helper,” while *kenegdo* (כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) denotes suitability and equality between them.

This concept underscores the complementary and harmonious relationship between male and female in social, emotional, and spiritual life. The bond established is not merely a social connection but reflects divine fellowship, where each individual holds an essential place and role within the community to mutually support and enrich one another, consistent with the multifaceted unity within God’s own essence.

In this dimension of creation, man and woman are created in harmony that reflects the glory of God. Genesis 2:21-22 elucidates the creation of woman from man, where the Lord God takes one of the *tsela* (צֵלַע) from the body of the male human (אִישׁ) and forms it into a woman, *isha* (אִשָּׁה), who is then presented to the man. This not only indicates the origin of woman but also affirms the profound bond between the two (Kaiser, 2000, p. 112). In this regard, woman is not created as a lesser being, but as an integral part of the existence of man, underscoring the principle of equality and deep interconnection.

The concept of *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) signifies not only mutual respect but also the essential partnership between man and woman in fulfilling God’s purpose for creation. In Genesis 1:28, God commands both to “be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it,” highlighting that their mission is shared, rather than one being subordinate to the other. Their role as co-regents over creation (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 121) demonstrates that stewardship of the earth requires collaboration, unity, and mutual support, ensuring that the divine mandate is carried out effectively. This calling extends beyond reproduction to encompass the responsible management of resources, environmental care, and the ethical governance of human society. Ultimately, the establishment of *ezer kenegdo* reinforces the theological principle that men and women are designed to work together in harmony, reflecting God’s relational nature and sustaining creation with wisdom and integrity.

In creation, God made man, referred to as *ish* (אִישׁ), and woman, referred to as *isha* (אִשָּׁה), as complementary beings. In Genesis 2:21-22, it is recorded, “Then the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he slept, he took one of his *tsela* (צֵלַע) and closed up the place with flesh. And the Lord God fashioned the *tsela* (צֵלַע) that He had taken from the man into a woman (*isha*, אִשָּׁה) and brought her to the man.” In this context, woman, *isha* (אִשָּׁה), is created from man, *ish* (אִישׁ), demonstrating the depth of their relationship and connection.

The concept of *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) indicates that both have unique roles and responsibilities, yet remain complementary. This underscores the importance of collaboration in

living life together. In Ephesians 5:31, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become *אֶחָד בָּשָׂר* (*ehād bāsār*).” This signifies that the relationship between man and woman is not merely physical, but also emotional and spiritual, which supports the formation of a healthy community.

The concept of *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) reflects not only mutual support and appreciation in the relationship between man and woman but also the fundamental equality and interdependence between them. In Genesis 1:28, God commands both to “be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it,” emphasizing their shared responsibility in fulfilling the divine mandate for creation. Rather than depicting woman as a subordinate assistant, *ezer kenegdo* signifies a coequal partnership in which both man and woman complement one another in their roles as stewards of creation (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 121). Their union is designed to foster collaboration, community, and harmony within the created world, reflecting the relational nature of God Himself. Moreover, human beings are not created in isolation but as an integral part of the broader order of creation, which encompasses physical, metaphysical, social, and spiritual dimensions (Brueggemann, 1997, p. 98). This theological framework underscores that the formation of humanity is not a distinct or separate event but rather an essential component of God’s grand design, in which human relationships and responsibilities are deeply embedded in the fabric of creation.

The physical environment in which humanity is placed also emphasises the relationship between humans and nature. As beings living in a world governed by the laws of nature, humans are called to honour and preserve the beauty and order of the world, as God saw that everything He had made was “very good” (Genesis 1:31) (Von Rad, 1972, p. 134). This beauty of nature is not merely a dwelling place but serves as the foundation for human life, which is connected to creation as a whole.

From a metaphysical perspective, humans are called to adhere to the norms and moral laws established by God. The prohibition against eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, as explained in Genesis 2:16-17, is a concrete example of the moral boundaries that exist. God said, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat” (Kaiser, 2000, p. 215). This prohibition is not merely physical but also spiritual, marking the relationship between humanity and God with an emphasis on obedience and moral responsibility.

The social environment created for humanity is a context in which individuals live in community, support one another, and bear responsibility towards each other. The relationship between man and woman is not merely an individual connection but also a reflection of the harmony and solidarity that is expected within the human community. In Genesis 2:24, it is stated that a man shall “leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This demonstrates the importance of building healthy relationships, founded on love and devotion, to complement one another within a larger community (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 74). Such relationships are not merely functional but are deeply rooted in the divine design, reflecting the unity and interdependence seen in creation. When individuals work together in mutual respect and shared purpose, they contribute to a harmonious and just society, fulfilling the greater vision of human coexistence as intended by God.

Spiritually, humanity has a calling to relate to the Creator and to worship Him. In Genesis 1:27, the assertion that humans are created “in the image of God” (בְּצֶלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים, *selem Elohim*) reinforces the divine purpose that humanity is called to live in a holy relationship with God (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 112). The creation of man and woman also signifies a calling to fellowship with the Lord, to live in awareness of His presence, and to honour His holiness. This invites humanity to live in community with God, which forms the foundation of human spiritual existence.

The mandate for humanity to fill the earth and manage the universe carries profound implications of responsibility. When humanity transgresses the boundaries set by God, as seen in the story of the Fall (Genesis 3), the consequences impact all of creation, disrupting the existing harmony (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 94). In this regard, an understanding of creation should motivate us to return to our original calling as good stewards, nurturing creation with full responsibility.

In the context of creation, the relationship between man and woman, as well as the responsibility towards creation, is woven together into a unified whole. Through this understanding, humanity is called to live in harmony with the Creator, fellow creation, and the environment. Therefore, it is important to recognise that within creation, each individual, whether male or female, has an important and complementary role in fulfilling the divine purpose in this world. The physical, social, and spiritual interconnections are intertwined in unity.

### **The Earth אֶרֶץ as the Origin of the Human Body**

The creation of humanity within the tradition of Hebrew theology holds profound and complex significance, particularly in the context of the element of earth, or *adamah* (אֶרֶץ). This concept serves not merely as a physical foundation for human existence; it also symbolises the intimate interaction between humanity, the environment, and the Creator. In Genesis 2:7, there is a significant statement regarding the origin of humanity: “Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground” (*min ha-adamah* אֶרֶץ-הָאָדָמָה). This phrase indicates that the human body was formed from material that originates from the earth, illustrating that humanity is an integral part of God’s entire creation (Kaiser, 2000, p. 58). This connection signifies that humans are not separate from nature but are deeply embedded within it, sharing a common origin with the rest of creation. Such an understanding reinforces the theological and ethical responsibility of humanity to care for and sustain the created world, recognizing that their well-being is inseparable from the health of the environment. Ultimately, this affirms the sacred relationship between humanity and creation, emphasizing the role of humans as stewards entrusted with maintaining the harmony and balance established by God.

From a linguistic perspective, the term *adamah* (אֶרֶץ) shares the same root as *adam* (אָדָם), which is commonly translated as “man.” This relationship not only creates the identity of humanity as beings connected to the earth but also suggests that the intrinsic nature of humanity is bound to the conditions of the natural world. It establishes an understanding that humanity exists not outside the ecosystem but as an inseparable part of it. This emphasis invites reflection on the ecological responsibilities borne by humanity in sustaining and balancing nature (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 36). The interconnectedness between humans and the environment implies that any disruption to nature also affects human life, highlighting the need for ethical stewardship. By acknowledging this responsibility, humanity is called to act with wisdom and care in managing natural resources, ensuring that creation continues to flourish for future generations. Ultimately, the call to sustain and balance nature is not only a practical necessity but also a moral and spiritual obligation that reflects humanity’s role as stewards of God’s creation.

Furthermore, the creation process involving earth (אֶרֶץ, *adamah*) underscores the importance of the physical element in human existence. In the Hebrew text, God does not merely form the human body from the earth but also breathes the breath of life into it, imparting a soul and unique spiritual identity. The term *nephesh* (נֶפֶשׁ), often translated as “soul” or “breath,” indicates that human life results from the interaction between physical and spiritual elements. This highlights that human existence is more than just biological components; it encompasses a spiritual dimension that affects how we relate to ourselves, to God, and to other creations (Walton, 2001, p. 114).

The significance of the earth in the creation of humanity also implies our moral responsibility towards the environment. Genesis 2:15 hints at humanity's role as guardians and stewards of creation when God places humanity in the Garden of Eden “to work it and keep it” (*le'āvedāh u-le'shamrāh*, וְלַעֲבֹדָהּ וְלִשְׁמָרָהּ). This mandate not only calls upon humanity to manage resources but also to uphold the integrity of ecosystems. In a modern context, where numerous environmental threats arise from unsustainable resource exploitation, this understanding becomes increasingly relevant and urgent (Habel, 1996, p. 58).

Through the lens of creation, the relationship between humanity and the earth illustrates a harmonious unity. Humanity is expected to act as wise stewards, respecting and caring for the earth as part of their responsibility. When humanity fulfils this role, they contribute to the maintenance of life on earth, supporting the diversity of ecosystems and preserving the vital balance necessary for the survival of all beings. This reinforces the notion that environmental stewardship is an integral part of humanity's calling as beings created in the image of God (Goff, 2015, p. 132).

In reflecting on this relationship, it is essential to consider the impact of human actions on the earth and its surrounding environment. When humanity exploits the earth without giving back or neglects principles of sustainable management, the consequences can be catastrophic for both nature and human life. The reintroduction of balanced management ethics, which respects *adamah* (אֲדָמָה) as a source of life, should be a priority to restore harmony between humanity and creation, as intended by God (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 112). Furthermore, recognizing that humanity is formed from *adamah* fosters a deeper awareness of equality and interconnectedness with all of creation. By understanding ourselves as part of an ecosystem, we can transform the way we interact with the environment and other living beings, encouraging a mindset of respect and responsibility. This awareness compels humanity to honour not only fellow humans but also all forms of life, reaffirming that creation is not merely a resource to be used but a sacred trust to be nurtured. Ultimately, this understanding calls for a life of harmony and stewardship, where human actions reflect care for God's creation and a commitment to sustaining its balance for future generations (Wright, 2004, p. 145).

In conclusion, the creation of humanity from *adamah* (אֲדָמָה) is not merely a physical fact but carries profound theological and ethical dimensions. Through the recognition of the intrinsic relationship between humanity and the earth, we are reminded of our moral responsibilities towards other creations and the importance of maintaining ecological balance. The concept of *adamah* (אֲדָמָה) invites us to consider not only human needs but also to understand that our existence on this earth is inseparable from a broader context, encompassing our relationships with God, our fellow humans, and all of creation.

By reflecting upon our origins as beings created from the earth, we are called to embody values of justice, care, and gratitude towards creation. This should encourage us to commit ourselves to fulfilling our responsibilities as wise stewards, in order to realise God's vision for a good and balanced world. In this way, we can live according to God's will and create a better world for future generations.

### **Nature Before the Fall of Humanity**

Before the fall of humanity, the natural world, as a creation of God, is articulated in the early texts of the Book of Genesis, particularly in Genesis 1 and 2, which outline the process of creation and the relationship between God, humanity, and other creations. In Genesis 1:31, God evaluates all His creations and states that everything is “very good” (טוֹב מְאֹד, *tov me'od*). This declaration underscores that at the beginning of creation, everything existed in a state of perfection, without blemish or corruption, establishing a foundation for a theological understanding of the

universe as intended by God (Walton, 2001, p. 134). In this context, the statement of “very good” encompasses not only humanity but also the entirety of creation, including the earth and all its contents.

The relationship between God, humanity, and nature in the beginning was characterized by harmony and mutual complementarity, reflecting divine order and purpose. Humanity, as the crown of creation, was placed in the Garden of Eden (גֶּן־עֵדֶן, *Gan 'Eden*) with a sacred mandate to manage and nurture the rest of creation. This responsibility is explicitly stated in Genesis 2:15: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it" (לְעֹמֵד וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ, *le'āvedāh u-le'shamrāh*), emphasizing both an active role in cultivation and an obligation to preserve and protect the created world. The use of these Hebrew terms indicates that humanity's task is not one of exploitation but of stewardship, where the flourishing of creation is intricately linked to human well-being. By embracing this role, humans ensure the continued sustainability of creation, which in turn provides essential resources such as food, water, and a stable environment necessary for survival (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 87).

Beyond its practical implications, the act of managing and nurturing creation fosters a deeper ethical and spiritual awareness, reinforcing the interconnectedness between humanity and the natural world. It cultivates a sense of gratitude, responsibility, and reverence for life, shaping a worldview that sees nature not as a mere commodity but as a sacred trust given by God. However, failure to uphold this responsibility has dire consequences, as evidenced by environmental degradation, climate change, and ecological crises, all of which serve as stark reminders of the fragile interdependence between humanity and nature (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 154). Disruptions in the natural order not only affect ecosystems but also threaten human livelihoods, social stability, and overall well-being.

Thus, the call to stewardship is not simply a command but a fundamental principle embedded in human existence, shaping how individuals relate to both creation and the Creator. Humanity's responsibility towards nature is not an optional task but an essential aspect of its divine vocation, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the balance and beauty of creation (Kaiser, 2000, p. 78). This responsibility underscores the theological reality that creation care is an act of obedience to God, a reflection of His relational nature, and a testament to human accountability. By nurturing and preserving creation, humans do not merely ensure ecological sustainability but also fulfill their moral and spiritual calling to safeguard God's handiwork. Neglecting this duty leads to widespread destruction, disrupting not only the environment but also the equilibrium necessary for human flourishing. Ultimately, caring for nature is an expression of humanity's purpose, reinforcing the intrinsic connection between human existence, divine intention, and the integrity of creation.

During this period, the interaction between humanity and nature was harmonious, and nature served as a companion to humanity in their existence. Humanity not only interacted with creation but also engaged directly with God. In a state of obedience to God, humanity experienced His presence in every aspect of life, rendering nature as the medium through which they could sense and appreciate the greatness and goodness of God. Human life in Eden reflected an ideal condition where all creation operated in perfect order and harmony (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 47). This state of existence demonstrated the original divine intention, in which humanity, nature, and God were intricately connected in a balanced and flourishing relationship. The absence of conflict, suffering, and exploitation in Eden highlights the significance of living in accordance with God's design, where stewardship, mutual respect, and responsibility towards creation were fundamental aspects of human existence. However, this harmony was not meant to be passive but required active participation from humanity in maintaining and nurturing creation. This ideal state serves as both a theological foundation and an ethical model, reminding humanity that its role is not

merely to inhabit the earth but to preserve and sustain the integrity of creation as a reflection of divine will.

The concept of the Garden of Eden (גן-עֵדֶן, *Gan 'Eden*) as the dwelling place of humanity reflects the beauty and abundance desired by God. The Garden of Eden (גן-עֵדֶן, *Gan 'Eden*) is depicted as a location abundant with various types of trees that are pleasing and good for food (Genesis 2:9). In the text, it is stated, "And the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (וַיַּטֵּעַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גַּן-עֵדֶן, *va-yita Yahweh Elohim gan 'Eden*). The presence of these trees signifies that nature is not merely a source of physical sustenance for humanity, but also a place to enjoy the beauty and diversity of God's creation. This creates a profound spiritual experience for humanity living in obedience and fellowship with God (Habel, 1996, p. 101). Such an existence fosters a deep sense of purpose, where human life is not only sustained by creation but also enriched through a harmonious relationship with the Creator. When humanity aligns itself with divine will, every aspect of life—both physical and spiritual—flourishes, reinforcing the interconnectedness between God, humans, and the natural world. This sacred bond serves as a reminder that true fulfillment is found not in domination over creation, but in responsible stewardship and a life that reflects divine harmony. Ultimately, living in obedience and fellowship with God is not just a theological ideal but a fundamental calling that shapes the moral and ethical foundation of human existence.

Furthermore, the condition before the fall highlights the significance of understanding humanity's responsibility as stewards of creation. Humanity is expected not only to enjoy the beauty of nature but also to care for and preserve it as part of God's will. This stewardship encompasses the wise and sustainable management of natural resources, which is a calling for every generation to preserve His creation. This understanding invites reflection on environmental ethics in the context of modern life, where nature is often exploited without consideration for its long-term impacts (Goff, 2015, p. 202). The growing environmental crises, such as deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss, highlight the urgent need for humanity to rethink its role as stewards of creation. Rather than viewing nature as a mere resource for human consumption, there must be a shift toward a more responsible and sustainable approach that aligns with the original divine mandate. Recognizing the interconnectedness between humanity and nature fosters a deeper sense of accountability, encouraging ethical decision-making that prioritizes ecological balance and the well-being of future generations. Ultimately, embracing environmental stewardship is not only a practical necessity but also a moral obligation that reflects humanity's responsibility in preserving the integrity of creation as part of its divine calling.

In the Garden of Eden (גן-עֵדֶן, *Gan 'Eden*), human life focused not only on fulfilling physical needs but also included a deep spiritual experience. The close presence of God and intimate interaction with creation provided humanity with the opportunity to understand and embody a deeper meaning of life. In this harmony, humanity became a part of God's plan to create and sustain the world, participating in divine activities that transcend physical boundaries (Wright, 2004, p. 115). In this context, the interaction between humanity and nature is not merely a functional relationship but a profound connection filled with love and respect for creation.

Although this initial state demonstrates idealism in the relationship between humanity, God, and nature, the fall ultimately altered this dynamic. Through the transgression of Adam and Eve, disobedience to God's command resulted in widespread consequences not only for them but for all of creation. The fall created a chasm between humanity and God and affected the entire order of nature, which had previously operated in harmony (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 142). This disruption was not merely spiritual but also had profound existential and ecological consequences. The relationship between humans and the environment, once marked by mutual care and balance, became strained as the ground was cursed, leading to toil, suffering, and ecological instability

(Genesis 3:17-19). The harmony that once characterized creation was replaced by disorder, as evidenced by natural calamities, human exploitation of resources, and the increasing fragility of ecosystems (Brueggemann, 1997, p. 104). Additionally, the fall introduced alienation among humans, fostering conflict, inequality, and broken relationships, further exacerbating the disruption of divine order. The consequence of sin, therefore, extends beyond individual morality and affects the very fabric of existence, reinforcing the need for restoration and responsible stewardship of creation. Ultimately, the fall serves as a reminder that human disobedience carries far-reaching implications, highlighting the urgency of reconciliation—not only between humanity and God but also within human relationships and the natural world. The text in Genesis 3:17-19 reveals the consequences of the fall, where God declares, "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life" (אָרֻרָה הָאָדָמָה, *'arurah ha'adamah*). This reflects a shift from a state of harmony to a condition where nature now experiences difficulty as a result of human actions.

In conclusion, the period before the fall of humanity reveals a harmonious relationship between God, humanity, and nature. Nature, as a “very good” creation, served as a companion for humanity in living in accordance with God's will. Through responsible management and stewardship, humanity is invited to sense and appreciate the beauty and presence of God in every aspect of creation. This demands us to reflect upon our role as stewards of creation in the modern world, with the hope of restoring the harmony desired by God for all of creation.

### **Consequences of Community Violation**

The fall of humanity into sin, as recorded in Genesis 3, represents a critical moment that has far-reaching consequences extending beyond the individual. When Adam and Eve violated God's command, they not only disregarded divine law but also disrupted the fundamental relationship between God, humanity, and creation. The sin (חַטָּא, *chatah*) that entered the world reflects a state in which humanity deviated from God's will and purpose in creation, signifying a significant separation in divine relations.

The term sin (חַטָּא, *chatah*) itself carries the meaning of “deviating” or “straying,” indicating an action that fails to meet the target set by God. The transgression of the Lord's command leads to a comprehensive breakdown in the order of creation. One reason that God is not glorified through humanity is that this act of rebellion obscures the glory that should radiate through a right relationship between humanity and the Creator. As stated in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” This sin creates a profound divide, alienating humanity not only from God but also from fellow humans and from the natural world. In the context of *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ), where male and female were created to complement and support one another, the violation of God's command has serious repercussions. Genesis 2:24 states, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (בְּיֶשֶׁר אֶחָד, *basar echad*). However, after the fall, the relationship that was meant to be harmonious often becomes a source of conflict. In Genesis 3:16-19, God outlines the consequences of the violation: “To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow in childbirth; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you’” (Genesis 3:16). “But because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life” (Genesis 3:17).

This transgression does not merely impact the individual; it also creates collective suffering that affects relationships among humans. Disobedience results in the *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) relationship, which was intended to be supportive, becoming strained, thus fostering tension and conflict that disrupt harmony within the household and the broader community.

Furthermore, sin also affects humanity's relationship with the natural world. In Genesis 1:28, God commands humanity to manage and dominate the earth. However, after the fall, this relationship becomes distorted; nature no longer serves as a source of harmonious life but reacts to humanity's disobedience. The once-perfect balance between humanity and creation is disrupted, leading to a world marked by suffering, struggle, and decay. Genesis 3:17-19 describes how the ground is cursed, producing thorns and thistles, making human labor difficult and turning what was once an effortless provision into a relentless struggle for survival. This rupture extends beyond agriculture and manifests in broader environmental degradation, such as unpredictable weather patterns, natural disasters, and the depletion of resources, all of which reflect the brokenness introduced by sin (Eichrodt, 1985, p. 148). Furthermore, human exploitation of nature—driven by greed, domination, and disregard for ecological limits—exacerbates the consequences of the fall. Rather than serving as responsible stewards of creation, humanity often engages in destructive practices that deplete and pollute the earth, leading to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and climate change (Brueggemann, 1997, p. 112). This ongoing degradation is not merely an environmental crisis but a theological and moral failure, highlighting the continued effects of humanity's rebellion against divine order. The fall not only alienated humans from God and one another but also placed creation itself under the burden of corruption, awaiting redemption (Romans 8:19-22). Despite this broken state, the Bible presents hope in God's plan for restoration, calling humanity to repent, reconcile, and restore creation. The divine mandate of stewardship, though tainted by sin, remains a crucial responsibility that requires wisdom, humility, and a renewed commitment to caring for the earth. Thus, the consequences of the fall serve as both a warning and an opportunity—reminding humanity of the destruction caused by disobedience while also inviting a return to the original purpose of harmonious coexistence with nature under God's sovereignty. Genesis 3:17-19 describes God's curse upon the ground, which results in the earth's produce no longer being easily obtained: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread. Until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17).

The consequence of sin leads to serious ecological impacts, creating imbalances within the ecosystem. Humanity, which was meant to function as a responsible steward, instead contributes to environmental degradation. By exploiting natural resources without consideration, humanity inflicts enduring harm upon the earth, which should have been preserved and nurtured. The communication and fellowship that were meant to exist between humanity and God, between human beings, and with nature also suffer severe damage. Isaiah 59:2 states, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." This indicates that sin creates a tangible separation in humanity's relationship with God. The fellowship that should be intimate and loving between God and humanity is disrupted, resulting in uncertainty in faith and hope.

On a social level, humanity's disobedience to God engenders injustice and conflict in human relationships. Sin breeds selfishness and indifference towards the needs and suffering of others, leading to fractures within the community. In a society that should live in solidarity and interdependence, sin creates alienation, competition, and strife.

Overall, the fall of humanity into sin not only has individual repercussions but also undermines the order of creation established by God. Humanity was created to live in a harmonious relationship with God, with one another, and with nature. It is vital for humanity to recognise the impact of sin and strive to return to God's will, rebuilding broken relationships for the sake of community restoration and the order of good creation. The restoration of these relationships serves as a calling for humanity to live in solidarity, interdependence, and obedience to the God who created them with a noble purpose.

## Creation After the Fall of Man

Following humanity's fall into sin, as recorded in the narrative of Genesis 3, the state of creation, which was previously described as “very good” (כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה, וְהָיָה-טוֹב מְאֹד, *kol asher asah, ve-hineh tov meod*; Genesis 1:31), now experiences significant suffering. God, as the sovereign Creator, imposes consequences upon Adam regarding his transgression of His command. In Genesis 3:17-19, God declares to Adam:

“The ground (אֲדָמָה, *adamah*) shall bring forth thorns and thistles for you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall grow for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground (אֲדָמָה, *adamah*), for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (כִּי-עָפָר, אָתָּה וְאָל-(-) פָּר, תְּשׁוּבָע (Genesis 3:17-19).

This statement clearly indicates that the ground, once a source of life and prosperity, is now filled with difficulty. The fruits of the earth can no longer be easily obtained; rather, humanity must face many obstacles, reflecting the corruption brought about by sin. The consequences of this transgression imply repercussions not only for the individual but also for the order of creation as a whole.

The impact of the fall is far deeper and broader than mere difficulty in obtaining food. In this context, we witness that the social, metaphysical, and spiritual relationships between humanity and God, fellow humans, and creation have undergone profound disruption. Humanity is now alienated from God, who should have been the source of life and hope. This separation engenders a condition known as the “depravity of man,” where human nature and actions become flawed and distorted as a result of sin (Habel, 1996, p. 53). This state of depravity not only affects humanity's relationship with God but also leads to internal conflict, as well as tension and exploitation within human communities and between humanity and creation. As a consequence, creation itself groans under the weight of human sin, awaiting redemption and restoration (Romans 8:22).

This event creates an atmosphere of estrangement, where humanity is not only separated from its Creator but also from one another. In human relationships, the fall results in increased injustice, conflict, and dissatisfaction, rooted in the selfish nature that emerges as a consequence of sin. Furthermore, the relationship between humanity and creation also suffers damage. Creation, which was meant to function as a partner and supporter of human life, now becomes an adversary full of challenges. In this context, the “depravity of creation” becomes evident, where all aspects of creation operate in a disharmonious manner (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 65). This disharmony highlights the brokenness not only of humanity's internal state but also the disrupted relationship between humanity and the natural world, as both creation and human nature await reconciliation through divine restoration.

The suffering experienced by creation is not only a consequence of humanity's disobedience but also a part of a larger reality in the history of salvation. Creation suffers negative effects from human sin; for instance, climate change, natural disasters, and ecosystem imbalances can be seen as manifestations of a deeper corruption. This disharmony not only poses challenges for humanity but also serves as a call to return to God's will in order to restore the broken relationships (Wright, 2004, p. 115). Such suffering acts as a reminder of the need for humanity's repentance and the renewal of both human hearts and the created order, highlighting the ongoing need for stewardship, responsibility, and a return to the divine harmony that was intended in creation.

Furthermore, it is essential to understand that the restoration of the relationship between humanity and creation is not solely an individual responsibility but a collective one. In a theological context, everyone is called to participate in this restoration process through actions that align with God's will. This includes wisely managing natural resources, reducing negative

environmental impacts, and protecting biodiversity. Such actions are not only vital for human survival but also for maintaining the ecological balance established by God.

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus reminds His followers to be the salt and light of the world. Actions that safeguard and restore creation embody this calling, as we are expected to be agents of change who bring justice and restoration to creation. We are called to be a voice for the voiceless, including creation itself, which often suffers from human injustice and exploitation. In this regard, every individual contributes to preserving the integrity of creation and fulfilling the stewardship mandate given by God since the dawn of creation.

Overall, humanity's fall into sin results in profound effects on the order of creation, which now endures suffering and difficulties that were previously absent. Human disobedience leads to emptiness and destruction, creating a significant distance between creation and its Creator. This serves as a reminder that restoration and reconciliation with God and creation are urgent necessities, demanding proactive action from humanity to return to His will.

### **The Promise of Restoration**

Although the fall of humanity into sin brought severe consequences for all creation, God did not leave His creation without hope. In the narrative of Genesis 3:15, we encounter a highly significant promise, where God declares, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (אִיבָה אֲשֶׁתּוֹ בֵּין-כָּכָר) לְכֹן, בֵּין נְרָעָה וּבֵין-נְרָעָה; *Eivah esh'ten bein kaveir lakhain, bein zara'kha u-vein zara'ah*). This text implies a deep hope for the coming of a Saviour who will crush the head of the serpent, symbolising the evil forces present in this world. This promise reflects the assurance that, despite the fall, God remains committed to restoring and saving His creation (Sailhamer, 1992, p. 82). This “protoevangelium” provides the foundation for the biblical narrative of redemption, where the ultimate defeat of evil and the restoration of harmony in creation will occur through the work of the Messiah.

The term *zera* (זֶרַע), meaning “seed” or “offspring,” in this context refers to the woman’s descendant who will become the Saviour. It indicates that from within the fallen creation, a new hope will arise, bringing restoration. This promise also implies the struggle between good and evil, wherein ultimately good will prevail (Wright, 2006, p. 47). Thus, we can understand that the promised restoration is not limited to humanity but encompasses all creation. In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, it is stated that all creation longs for this restoration, waiting for the moment when God will restore all things to their intended state (Romans 8:19-21; Beale, 2011, p. 124). This longing for redemption reflects the deep-seated hope within creation itself, anticipating the complete renewal that will come through Christ.

Furthermore, God's action of providing garments made of skin for Adam and Eve after their fall, as noted in Genesis 3:21, carries profound meaning. The text states, “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them” (וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתוּנֹת אֶרֶן וַיַּלְבִּישֵׁם) *Vaya'as Yahweh Elohim le-Adam ve'ishto k'tonet or ve-yalbishem*). This act serves not merely to cover their nakedness but symbolises God's commitment to restoring the relationship that had been severed due to sin. In this context, the skins used for clothing can be seen as a symbol of sacrifice, pointing to the forthcoming sacrifice that would atone for humanity's sins (Goldingay, 2003, p. 62). This moment prefigures the ultimate sacrifice of Christ, who would offer Himself to reconcile humanity and creation to God, beginning the process of healing that Genesis 3:15 anticipates.

The naming of Eve by Adam, recorded in Genesis 3:20, is also significant. Adam calls his wife “Eve” (חַוָּה, *Chavah*) because she becomes “the mother of all the living” (כִּי-הָיָא מְאֵת אֵם כָּל-חַי) *ki hu me'et em kol chai*). By giving this name, Adam acknowledges God's promise regarding restoration and new life. Eve is not merely identified as Adam's wife but also as a representative

of all humanity, expected to experience new life through the promised restoration. This recognition fosters hope for future generations, who will inherit the promise of restoration and life given by God (Berkhof, 1996, p. 34). Her role extends beyond individual identity, symbolizing the broader human experience of fallenness, suffering, and the anticipation of redemption. Through Eve, the narrative of creation, sin, and restoration becomes a universal reality, emphasizing that humanity is not abandoned in its brokenness but is continually invited into God's redemptive plan. This promise of renewal highlights the enduring grace of God, reaffirming that despite the consequences of sin, there is always an opportunity for restoration, transformation, and a return to divine purpose.

Additionally, this promise of restoration underscores God's nature as a loving and gracious Lord. In Ezekiel 36:26-27, God promises to give His people a new heart and place His Spirit within them: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב הַדָּשׁ וְרוּחַ הַדָּשׁ אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם; *Ve'natati lakhem lev chadash ve'ruach chadashah eten be'kirbachem*). Here, we see that restoration is not only physical but also spiritual, where God desires to renew and transform the hearts of humanity to live according to His will (Sailhamer, 1992, p. 88). This renewal is not merely about repairing what was broken but about restoring humanity to its original purpose—living in harmony with God, one another, and creation. The process of transformation requires repentance, faith, and a commitment to align human will with divine intention, allowing individuals and communities to experience true renewal. Through this spiritual restoration, humanity is given the opportunity to break free from the cycle of sin and estrangement, embracing a life of righteousness, peace, and divine purpose. Ultimately, restoration is a call to return to the life that God intended, where obedience, love, and stewardship reflect the fullness of His redemptive plan.

Moreover, the promise of restoration that God gives to humanity also has far-reaching implications for the relationship between humanity and the environment. After the fall, humanity's relationship with nature became fractured, as evidenced by the effects of the fall on creation. However, through His promise, God indicates that there is hope for the restoration of this relationship. In Romans 8:21, Paul expresses hope that “the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (ὅτι ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθερωθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ Θεοῦ; *hoti hē ktisis eleutherōthēsetai apo tēs doulaias tēs phthorās eis tēn eleutherian tēs doxēs tōn tekhnōn tou Theou*), which reflects the promise of restoration given to humanity and all creation. As “all creation” participates in the divine plan, so “we hope for the hope that does not disappoint.” Therefore, this hope invites every individual to actively participate in manifesting God's glory and justice in this world, while remembering that this restoration is made possible by the work of the Messiah, who is the complete fulfilment of God's promise regarding the “woman's seed” (זֶרַע אִשָּׁה (*zera isha*)). This underscores the importance of restoration not only for humanity but also for all creation, illustrating that all aspects of life are interconnected in God's plan (Wright, 2006, p. 84). This underscores the importance of restoration not only for humanity but also for all creation, illustrating that all aspects of life are interconnected in God's plan.

Throughout this narrative of restoration, we observe how God remains committed to restoring His creation despite humanity's fall into sin. The promise of a Saviour, the provision of garments made of skin, and the recognition of Eve's name serve as signs of hope, indicating that God plans to return humanity and all creation to their intended state. This promise of restoration not only depicts God's love and justice but also instils a yearning in the hearts of humanity for the perfect restoration that will be realised in His time (Beale, 2011, p. 220).

In the context of the promised restoration, it is important to remember that this process is not instantaneous; rather, it requires a journey of time and profound transformation in the lives of

humanity and all creation. God's promise of restoration necessitates a response from humanity, which entails surrender and a desire to live in obedience to Him. This creates a challenge for humanity to participate in God's plan, not only in receiving restoration but also in mending the fractured relationships with others and the environment.

As believers, we are called to be agents of restoration in this world, bringing hope and positive influence to every aspect of life—spiritual, social, and ecological. In this way, we actively engage in implementing the promise of restoration that God has set forth, creating a meaningful impact for future generations and stewarding God's creation as part of our responsibility as caretakers of the world entrusted to us. This restoration of relationships reflects the essence of the theology of the relationship between God, humanity, and creation, where every action we take is not only oriented towards human needs but also considers the well-being of creation as a whole.

### **The Work of Restoration in the Context of Creation Post-Human Fall**

Restoration is an initiative and work of God's grace that has been manifested since the beginning of creation. This promise of restoration paves the way for God to commence the process of returning the order of creation that has been disrupted by sin (Berkhof, 1996, p. 239). In this context, God is committed to restoring the broken relationships, both between humanity and Himself and between humanity and creation. This restoration reflects the fundamental nature of God, which is full of love and forgiveness, as well as His will to see His creation return to a state of harmony (Ladd, 1974, p. 314).

This concept of restoration aligns with the divine plan articulated in Genesis 1:31, where God saw everything that He had made and acknowledged that it was “very good” (טוב מאד, *tov me'od*) (Westermann, 1984m p. 72). This declaration affirms that the existence of a harmonious relationship between humanity, God, and the earth is the original purpose of creation. Restoration aims to return to this state, where all aspects of life support and function according to God's plan (Brueggemann, 1997, p. 118). Through His work of restoration, God invites humanity to return to a state where they can live in harmonious relationship with Him and the earth, stewarding and managing His creation responsibly.

In the context of restoration, it is important to understand that God does not only focus His attention on individuals but also on communities. As stated in Isaiah 43:19, “See, I am doing a new thing; now it springs up, do you not perceive it?” (הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי עוֹשֶׂה חֲדָשׁ, *hinneh anochi oseh chadash*) (Dempsey, 2003, p. 162). This indicates that God intends to restore all of His creation, including the human communities living within it. Restoration is not a temporary endeavour; rather, it is God's long-term commitment to re-establish the relationships that have been severed due to sin (Walton, 2011, p. 87).

Everything that occurs in this restoration reflects God's will and plan to bring humanity back to a state that is “very good” (טוב מאד, *tov me'od*) (Wright, 2013, p. 235). In this work of restoration, God grants humanity the grace to act as responsible stewards of His creation. This aligns with the mandate given to humanity in Genesis 1:28, where God commands humanity to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it” (וַיְרַדּוּ בְּרִגְתַּת הַיָּם, *urdu bidgat hayam*) (Kaiser, 1991, p. 102). This responsibility demands an awareness of the reciprocal relationships that must be established between humanity, God, and the earth.

The theology of creation emphasises that God, as the source and creator, plays a central role in every aspect of life (Haas, 1993, p. 54). In this context, restoration encompasses the renewal of relationships that are not only individual but also collective. By restoring relationships among humanity, God returns the integrity of communities that function according to His plan (Horrell, 2010, p. 121). This reminds us of the importance of living in solidarity and interdependence, which are part of God's divine calling for His people.

Human beings, as creations made in the image of God (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ, *b'tsalmenu*), are called to participate in His work, maintaining and managing creation responsibly (Snyder, 1997, p. 72). From this perspective, creation, fall, and restoration work together in a single narrative that demonstrates God's love and commitment to His creation. This narrative serves as a framework for understanding how God interacts with the world and how humanity contributes to His plan (Hays, 2016, p. 98). It reveals that God's engagement with creation is not distant or arbitrary but intentional and relational, emphasizing His ongoing involvement in guiding humanity toward redemption. At the same time, it highlights human responsibility in responding to God's call, demonstrating that divine purpose is realized through human obedience, faith, and stewardship. By recognizing this dynamic interaction, humanity gains a deeper awareness of its role in fulfilling God's will and sustaining the harmony of creation. Ultimately, this narrative reinforces the idea that history is not merely a sequence of events but a divine unfolding of restoration, where humanity is invited to participate in the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.

This work of restoration also reveals that God's nature not only demands justice but also expects repentance and a change of heart from His people. In Matthew 9:13, Jesus reminds us that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Morris, 1992, p. 115). This indicates that restoration involves a process of self-adjustment and recognition of the wrongs within humanity. Through repentance, humanity is invited to return to God and find new hope in a renewed relationship (Piper, 2004, p. 76).

The promised restoration occurs not only at the individual level but also at the cosmic level. In Romans 8:21, Paul states that the whole creation is waiting eagerly for the restoration and revelation of the children of God (οἰκουμένη ἐλευθερωθῆναι, *oikoumene eleutherōthēnai*) (Luther, 2017, p. 215). This reflects the belief that God plans to renew the entire world, removing all forms of suffering and injustice caused by sin. The work of restoration illustrates God's promise to create a new heaven and a new earth, where justice and peace will prevail (Ridderbos, 1996, p. 88). This divine renewal is not merely a return to the original creation but a transformation that surpasses its former state, establishing a reality where suffering, sin, and decay are no longer present. The promise of restoration extends beyond individual salvation, encompassing the redemption of all creation, reaffirming God's sovereignty over history and His commitment to restoring what was broken. Through this process, humanity is called to actively participate in God's redemptive work by embodying justice, love, and stewardship in preparation for the fulfillment of His ultimate plan. Ultimately, the vision of a renewed creation serves as both a source of hope and a call to action, reminding humanity that God's restoration is not only a future promise but also a present reality that begins with faithful obedience and transformative living.

It is important to note that this restoration is an ongoing process. In Ephesians 4:12-13, Paul explains that the purpose of restoration is to equip the saints for the work of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up and reach unity in the faith (ἵνα καταρτίσῃ τὰς ἀγίας, *hina katartisē tas hagian*) (Stott, 1997, p. 102). This indicates that restoration involves the active involvement of God's people in the process of building faith and strong community. In this regard, every individual is called to contribute, not only for personal spiritual growth but also for the welfare of the community as a whole.

Ultimately, this journey of restoration leads to eschatological hope, where God will complete His work by bringing all creation to perfection. In Revelation 21:5, God declares, "See, I am making all things new!" (Ἴδού, καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα, *Idou, kaina poiō panta*) (Horsley, 1999, p. 250). This affirms that restoration is not the final goal but part of a larger journey towards the fulfillment of God's plan for all creation. This work of restoration reminds us of God's faithfulness and His infinite love, which continually urges us to live in hope and faith (Barth, 2004, p. 124).

Overall, the work of restoration in the context of creation highlights the importance of returning to harmonious relationships between God, humanity, and the earth. Restoration is not merely a promise, but a call to action, reaffirming our commitment to the responsibility of being stewards of God's creation. Thus, restoration becomes not only a hope for us as individuals but also a collective mission involving all of humanity in the effort to restore harmony and justice within the created order established by God (Wright, 2010, p. 145).

In this journey of restoration, we are reminded that every step we take towards reconciliation and restoration is not only for our own benefit but also for the glory of God. Our actions as stewards of creation become a means for God to demonstrate His love and power. By participating in this work of restoration, we not only restore the disrupted order but also inspire others to recognise their responsibilities towards creation and contribute to creating a better world, where God's love and justice can be clearly expressed. This restoration invites us to see that every small action we take can have a significant impact in spreading the message of hope and peace throughout the world.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research emphasises that the theology of creation and the relationship between God, humanity, and nature in the Old Testament possess a depth that transcends a superficial understanding of the physical aspects of creation. The theology of perichoresis, which highlights the essence and existence of God within His Triune relationship before creation, affirms that God is not only the Creator but also actively engaged in interaction with His creation. This relationship illustrates that creation is rooted in the love and dynamic presence of God, where every aspect of creation has meaning and purpose within the divine plan. Through this approach, we can comprehend that everything is created not merely for its physical existence but also to engage in a harmonious relationship with the Creator.

Furthermore, humanity, as a being created from the ground (אֲדָמָה, *adamah*), occupies a central role in the ecosystem of creation. In this context, the human body is not merely an instrument but also a representation of the profound relationship between God and creation. This understanding reinforces humanity's responsibility to care for and manage creation wisely, fostering harmony within the complex relationships among humanity, God, and nature. The creation of humanity carries a mandate to act as stewards, reflecting the nature and character of God within His creation.

It is important to note that in the design of creation, there are no alternative sexes or genders. The terms *ish* (אִישׁ) and *isha* (אִשָּׁה) transcend the mere notion of “life partners,” reflecting a “unique fit” and “distinct sexual expression” between the two. This relationship affirms the complementarity that fosters harmony, as stated in Genesis 2:24: “Therefore, a man (*ish*, אִישׁ) shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife (*isha*, אִשָּׁה), and they shall become one flesh” (בְּשָׂר אֶחָד, *basar echad*). The concept of *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) in the Bible also illustrates the relationship between man and woman as partners who support and complement each other.

Thus, the creation of humanity as male and female is an integral part of God's plan, emphasising harmony within the relationships He desires. In discussing the state of nature before the fall of humanity, this article demonstrates the significance of the harmonious condition that God intended. The existence of a beautiful and orderly nature reflects the goodness of God, where each element supports one another and functions within the divine order. However, the violation of God's command brings serious consequences that affect not only humanity but also create imbalances within the community and nature. This illustrates the widespread impact of sin,

disrupting the order of creation that God has established and resulting in conditions that are not in accordance with His original plan.

On the other hand, the restoration promised by God is at the heart of the hope expressed in this article. The promise of restoration affirms that God remains committed to returning creation to a state of goodness, and this work of restoration involves the active participation of humanity. Restoration is not an individual endeavour but a collective mission that invites the entire community to contribute to the process of reconciliation with God and with one another. This underscores that, within the context of creation theology, every individual is called to take an active role in preserving, nurturing, and repairing relationships that have been disrupted by sin.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the theology of perichoresis, creation, and restoration within the context of the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Genesis. This article provides a new perspective by tracing the intrinsic relationship between the essence of God and the existence of humanity and nature, inviting readers to reflect on their position within God's work of creation. With this holistic approach, the research offers new insights into the moral and spiritual responsibilities of humanity in preserving and restoring the created order, making it relevant in contemporary contexts amid modern challenges. It is crucial to remember that a profound understanding of the relationship between God, humanity, and nature serves not only as a theological foundation but also as a calling for each individual to contribute to the creation of a better world. In facing today's environmental and social challenges, this harmonious relationship must be revitalised, recognising that the salvation and well-being of creation is a shared responsibility that must be upheld by all of humanity.

Nevertheless, in the teachings of the New Testament, as the full fulfilment of the Old Testament, the perfection of the restoration of humanity and all creation is through the person and work of Jesus Christ as the only way and goal of human salvation and the true restorer of His creation.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The implications of this study emphasise the importance of understanding creation and the theology of the relationship between God, humanity, and creation in the Old Testament, which extends beyond a mere physical view. The theology of perichoresis, which depicts the dynamic and intimate relationship between God in His Triune nature, forms the basis for our understanding of creation as an act of love and the presence of God. In this context, creation is not simply a physical process but also a profound and harmonious relationship between God, humanity, and His creation. The creation of humanity from the earth (אָדָמָה, *adamah*) underscores the deep connection between humanity and the natural world. Humans are not only beings created to live on earth but are also entrusted as stewards of creation, responsible for maintaining the balance and harmony of the world.

However, humanity's transgression of God's command has far-reaching consequences. The fall of humanity not only damaged the vertical relationship between humanity and God but also destroyed the horizontal relationships between humans, the natural world, and one another. Sin leads to injustice and disharmony that spread throughout creation, resulting in alienation within society and the universe. The world, initially created in harmony, now faces corruption and suffering as a consequence of disobedience to God's will.

In the teachings of the New Testament, as the complete fulfilment of the Old Testament, the restoration of humanity and the fallen creation is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only way and goal of human salvation and the true restorer of His creation, which was originally made good. Through His work on the cross and His resurrection, Jesus not only saves humanity from sin and alienation but also restores the broken relationships between humanity,

God, one another, and the universe. In Christ, the restoration promised by God is made real, inviting humankind to participate in this work of renewal.

Therefore, humanity's responsibility as stewards of creation remains relevant, but it must now be understood in light of the perfect work of restoration through Jesus Christ. This restoration pertains not only to the spiritual aspect of humanity but also involves social and ecological responsibilities. The Church and society are called to understand and practise this teaching, recognising that the restoration of creation is part of the broader Christian calling, which includes an active role in preserving and maintaining the world, as part of the restoration accomplished by Jesus Christ.

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