

**Lent to Easter 2015**

# Upside uMOI & Inside



**Lent 1 — The God Who Initiates Deep Change**

# Focus of Lent to Easter 2015

What does **renewal** look like for those already committed to Christ and his church (CMF)? Committed believers may not so much need a “reset” as **an invitation not to settle**.

God often turns our **expectations** “Upside Down & Inside Out” and calls us to **rethink** what we thought we knew, what we thought we were done with, and to discover more.

It was the “religious” who thought they had arrived and could learn nothing new about God and his plans for them.

So, what God needs from the faithful is **a willingness to be teachable** and to give ourselves to the way of **deep change**.

## **Genesis 9:8-11 NIV**

<sup>8</sup> Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: <sup>9</sup> “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you <sup>10</sup> and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. <sup>11</sup> I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

## **Genesis 9:12-13 NIV**

<sup>12</sup> And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: <sup>13</sup> I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

## **Genesis 9:14-17 NIV**

<sup>14</sup> Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, <sup>15</sup> I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.

<sup>16</sup> Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

<sup>17</sup> So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

# What's Going on in Genesis 1-11?

**Genre:** A biblical “myth” of the origins of everything, contrasting & correcting other ANE *pagan* versions

**Ch. 1-2 Creation** – ancient cosmology

**Ch. 3 Adam & Eve** – theodicy (why is there sin & death?)

**Ch. 5 Cain & Abel** – disorder & violence multiplied!

**Ch. 6 Nephilim** – “sons of God” or “Watchers” (1 Enoch)

**Ch. 6-9 Noah & Flood** – God brings about non-order

**Ch. 11 Tower of Babel** – God scatters & begins reordering

**Ch. 12 Call of Abram** – God establishes covenant with “father” Abraham; redemptive Hebrew narrative begins



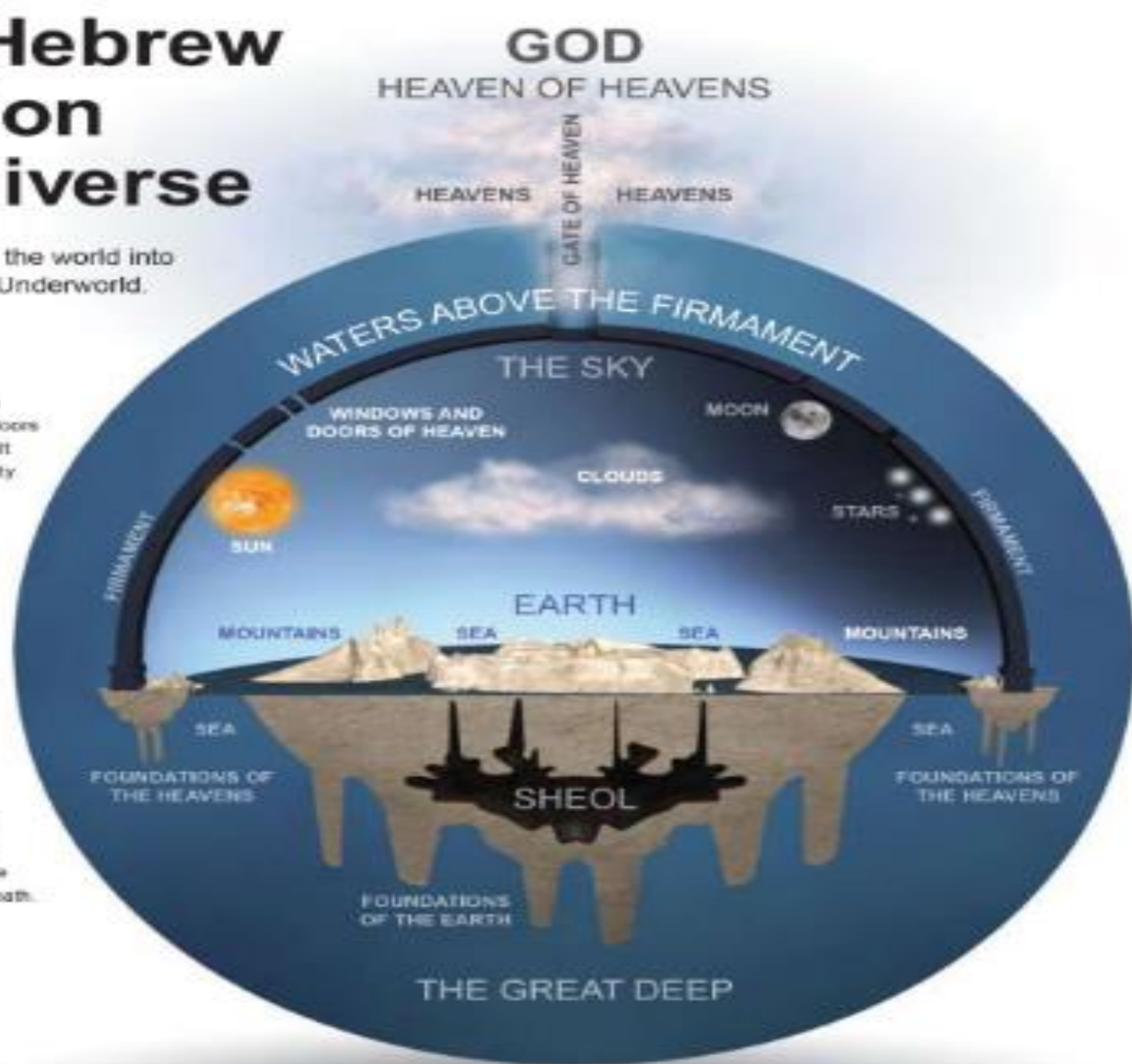
# Ancient Hebrew Conception of the Universe

The ancient Israelites divided the world into Heaven, Earth, Sea, and the Underworld.

They viewed the sky as a vault resting on foundations—perhaps mountains—with doors and windows that let in the rain. God dwelt above the sky, hidden in cloud and majesty.

The world was viewed as a disk floating on the waters, secured or moored by pillars. The earth was the only known domain—the realm beyond it was considered unknowable.

The Underworld (Sheol) was a watery or dusty prison from which no one returned. Regarded as a physical place beneath the earth, it could be reached only through death.



# The Origin-al Portrait of God: Through a Cruciformed Lens

- Unlike the gods of Mesopotamian myths, *Elohim* creates out of nothing, out of love, and with a divine purpose
- Human beings are not an after-thought; God places us at the pinnacle of creation, to reflect his image on earth
- God seeks us out, meets us where we are, and is merciful to us in our nakedness (weakness, guilt, and shame)
- God recognizes, to some extent, we are led astray by “serpents” and godless society, and he is understanding
- God allows “floodwaters” and chaos as a consequence of human and angelic evil, but his “rainbow” will follow
- God does not forsake human beings or his creation; he is patient and does not abandon his salvific program



## 1 Peter 3:18-22 NRSV

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Peter Davids' (NT Scholar) commentary:

“Although the NT never speaks of anyone evangelizing spirits, it does speak of the victory of Christ over spirits (e.g. 2 Cor 2:14; Col 2:15; Eph 6:11-12). Moreover, 1 Enoch also has a proclamation to spirits in prison (16:3), and it is a proclamation of judgment...”

“Thus it seems likely that this passage in 1 Peter refers to a proclamation of judgment by the resurrected Christ to the imprisoned spirits, that is, the fallen angels [Gen 6:1-4], sealing their doom as he triumphed over sin and death and hell, redeeming human beings.”

*NICNT: The First Epistle of Peter* (pgs 140-141)





“Don’t overlook the obvious here, friends. With God, one day is as good as a thousand years, a thousand years as a day. God isn’t late with his promise as some measure lateness. He is restraining himself on account of you, holding back the End because he doesn’t want anyone lost. **He’s giving everyone space and time to change.”**

**2 Peter 3:8-9 MSG**



## Isaiah 55:6-9 NIV

<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
call on him while he is near.

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake their ways  
and the unrighteous their thoughts.

Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

<sup>8</sup> “For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,”  
declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> “As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

## Isaiah 55:10-11 NIV

<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

## Isaiah 55:12-13 NIV

<sup>12</sup> You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,  
and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.

This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
that will endure forever.”

# The God Who Initiates Deep Change

Let's pray this aloud to God...

"Father, you loved me before I was even a thought in someone's head; Your "Let there be..." led to my existence

You gave me life, taught me to walk, but I've run from you; I've resisted your Spirit in my life; forfeited your peace

You created me for continued growth into your image, the perfect image of Jesus Christ, but I've been complacent

Thank you God for your forgiveness in Christ; help me to repent and to open my heart to your transformative power

Lord, we need you every hour; help us to change for your glory; we give ourselves to you now; in Jesus' name, Amen."



# Upside uMOI & Inside



Sermon audio & slides can be downloaded at:  
[www.christiansburgmennonite.org](http://www.christiansburgmennonite.org)

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