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5 The divine name YHWH, possibly vocalized originally as "Yahweh" [if not Jehovah], appears throughout much of the biblical tradition. English Bibles usually render this name as "The LORD." See note 33 of this paper.

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6 In biblical tradition, YHWH (God) is always represented by male gender language. That usage is only followed insofar as it is present in the quotations and subsequent quoted commentary on the texts utilized in this version of the article. It may be noted, however, that a number of biblical texts associate female gender with God. See, for example, Gen 1:26–27; 5:1–2; Prov 8:1–32; Isa 49:15; Wisd of Sol 7:24–8:1.

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7 The Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible is normally used for quotations in this paper because it renders the Hebrew (and other ancient biblical languages) more literally than other modern translations. For clarity, the divine name is generally rendered here as "God," although the underlying biblical texts often use the name "YHWH" instead of "God," and "YHWH" is utilized in this paper through direct textual quotations and subsequent quoted commentary.

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8 "P" is the symbol used by biblical scholars since the late nineteenth century to designate the so-called "Priestly" traditions found in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. These traditions are thought to derive from writers and editors associated with priests who officiated at the Jerusalem temple in the late sixth or fifth centuries BCE. Typical emphases include the distinction between priests ("the sons of Aaron") and Levites (seen as assistants to the priests); genealogies, especially of priests and Levitical families; ceremonial furnishings of the "tabernacle" or "tent of meeting" (conceived as a portable prototype of the eventual Jerusalem temple); and detailed instructions for carrying out numerous kinds of sacrificial offerings. In Genesis, texts attributed to P characteristically use the divine name Elōhīm, translated as "God." As to P tradition in Genesis 1–10, see generally Steck, World and Environment, 89–113; and Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, vol. 1 (New York: Harper, 1962) 232–79.

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Simkins notes that there is no biblical basis for the often-repeated assertion that the second creation story's account of the first man's naming other animals (Gen 2:19–20) signified human superiority or dominance over them (Simkin, Creator and Creation, 183).


15 See Gen 6:5, which characterizes the human condition before the flood: "YHWH saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Arguably, the Ps account at Gen 6:11-22 likewise attributes "violence" to humanity, not to other creatures, though other creatures somehow may have been corrupted by human depravity. See Anderson, Creation in the Old Testament, 161-65. In opposition to Steck (World and Environment), nothing in the biblical narrative suggests that humans had been threatened or harmed by violent animals. 

16 Granberg-Michaelson notes that after the flood, repetition of these commands was "conspicuously omitted" Granberg-Michaelson, A Worldly Spirituality, 64. The author of Ps 8:5-8, however, may represent a strand of biblical understanding to the effect that humans were to have dominion over other life-forms in the era after the flood. The character of such dominion is not indicated in the psalm. See Elizabeth Dodson Gray, "A Critique of Dominion Theology," in For Creation's Sake, Dieter T. Hessel, ed., (Philadelphia, Pa.: Geneva Press, 1985) 71-83; and James B. Tubbs, Jr., "Humble Dominion," Theology Today 50 (1994): 543-56. In the New Testament, Psalm 8 is read as a prophetic description of Christ's, not humankind's, rule or dominion: Eph 1:20-22; Heb 2:5-10. Ps 91:13, which seems to echo Ps 8:5-8, is in the context of a series of re-assurances to those who put their trust in God. Wisd of Sol 9:1-3 and Sir 17:2-4 merely recapitulate Genesis 1. 


18 See, Judg 2:11-23; 1 Kings 11:26-39; 2 Kings 17:1-18; 24:18-20; Job 38:4-39:8; Ps 22:27-28; 90-91, 94; 96-99; 135:5-12; 145:13; Amos 1-3; Jonah; and

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19 See Gen 7:22: “Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.” Under these conditions, marine mammals and reptiles would have survived the flood waters without needing to board the ark.

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20 That implication is made explicit in the covenant God made with all living beings in the next chapter (Genesis 9). See part II of this article.

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21 See, Ps 104:24: “O YHWH, how manifold are thy works! . . . [T]he earth is full of thy creatures.” Psalm 104 and P tradition were set down at approximately the same time. See also, Sir 16:29–30.

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22 See Gen 10:8–9; 25:27; 27:3–4, 30–33.

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23 Gen 9:2. Strangely little is said about fishing or eating fish in the Jewish scriptures or Old Testament. The only explicit instances mentioned occur in Num 11:5; Ezek 47:10; and Tob 8:1–5. See also, Neh 13:16.

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24 See note 106 of this paper.

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25 Clearly more is involved here than a mere “visceral prohibition against the consumption of blood.” Ismar Schorsch, in Spirit and Nature, Rockefeller and Elder, eds., 31. Compare Native American practices expressing reverence or concern for the life of animals killed for food.

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26 See Lev 17:10–14; Deut 12:20–27.

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27 According to Gen 10:1–32, all later humankind descended from Noah.

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29 The vessel was said to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high, with three decks (Gen 6:15–16).

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31 Holmes Rolston III refers to Noah's ark project as the first “Endangered Species Act” (Rolston, Environmental Ethics, 94). Critics who consider texts such as Gen 1:26–28 dispositive as to the biblical viewpoint in regard to human relations with other creatures, typically ignore Noah’s ark project. See, for example, Peter Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals (New York: Random House, 1977) 193–95. Such critics generally make no mention of the P covenant with every living creature (Gen 9:8–17).

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33 “J” is the symbol commonly used by biblical scholars to designate texts thought to derive from the “Yahwist” collector(s) and editor(s) of earlier traditions that appear in most of the biblical books from Genesis to 1 Kings. The symbol derives from the first letter of the transliterated divine name Jahweh (German), or Jehovah, Yahweh, or YHWH (English), typically used in these texts as early as Genesis 2. It is commonly thought that the “J” texts were collected and edited in the tenth century BCE in Judah, either during the time of Solomon, or a few decades afterwards. On major themes in J tradition, see Steck, *World and Environment*, 64–78.

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34 This text is the basis for the later prophetic affirmation that God’s “covenant of peace” would never “be removed” (Isa 54:9–10).

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36 See Gen 7:22.

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38 Compare Isa 24:5 (“the everlasting covenant”) and Ps 145:13 (“everlasting kingdom”).

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40 In Gen 9:13, the covenant is said to have been made between God and “the earth.” It is unclear whether, in this context, “the earth” itself is meant, or whether here “the earth” stands for the fuller expression, “every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth” as in Gen 9:16, 17.

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41 “The covenant ([Gen] 9:17) ... suggests that the Creator’s purpose is to
provide living space for all organisms, so that they may share the earth together” (Nash, Loving Nature, 101).

42 See also Wisd of Sol 1:14: “For [God] created all things that they might exist, and the creatures of the earth are wholesome”; and Sir 39:16: “All things are the works of the Lord, for they are very good.” As to biblical creation traditions, see Ian Barbour, Religion in an Age of Science, vol. 1 (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990) 130–35.

43 See Babbitt, “Between the Flood and the Rainbow,” Animal Liberation 2 (1996): 5. Regarding the rainbow as the sign of the covenant: “We are thus instructed that this everlasting covenant was made to protect the whole of creation, not for the exclusive use and disposition of mankind, but for the purposes of the Creator.” Several other commentators also have demonstrated that biblical faith generally is not anthropocentric. See, Dianne Bergant, “Is the Biblical Worldview Anthropocentric?” New Theology Review 4, no. 2 (1991): 5–14; John Cobb, Jr., Sustainability, Economics, Ecology, and Justice (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992) 92–93; and Barlow, “Why the Christian Right Must Protect the Environment,” British Columbia Environmental Affairs Law Review, 783: “In short, the [biblical] environmental narrative is neither biocentric nor anthropocentric; it is theocentric.”

44 Nothing in this covenant suggests that humans were to have dominion over other creatures. God, who initiated this covenant, was the one who had dominion. See notes 17 and 18 of this paper.

45 See, Job 12:10; Pss 36:5–6; 74:14; 104:10–30; 136:25; 145:8–9, 14–17; 147:9; Joel 2:22; Wisd of Sol 11:24–12:1; Sir 16:29–30; 18:13; 39:16, 33. Numerous biblical texts likewise represent wildlife and domestic animals calling upon YHWH or God to sustain them; and praising, blessing, or giving God thanks for doing so or for other mercies. See, Job 38:41; Pss 69:34; 96:11–13; 104:21, 26; 145:10, 15, 21; 148:7, 10; 150:6; Joel 1:20; Tob 8:5, 15; and Song of the Three Young Men vv. 35–59. This motif comes to expression in the Christian doxology: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below . . .”

46 See part IX of this article.

47 See part IV, B. 1. of this article.

48 Interpreters often include Leviticus 17 in the Holiness Code. Due to its affinity to characteristic Priestly motifs, however, that chapter is considered part of the Priestly Code in this article.


50 In this article, we also consider Exod 13:1–16 part of the PC.

51 Biblical commentators typically pass over such texts in silence, while studies of biblical faith and environmental ethics hardly ever mention them at all.