

From Start to Finish (Parts 1-3)

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In regard to: From Start to Finish

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From Start to Finish (Part One)

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Listen, Jacob. Listen, Israel—
I’m the One who named you!
I’m the One.
I got things started and, yes, I’ll wrap them up.
Earth is my work, handmade.
And the skies—I made them, too, horizon to horizon.
When I speak, they’re on their feet, at attention.
—Isaiah 48:12-13 (*The Message*)

At least three times in the Old Testament and four in the New, God explicitly declares Himself the First and the Last: Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Revelation 1:17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13.¹ By that count, the formula “the first and the last” becomes not only one of the most obvious merisms in God’s Word but also one of the most common. Since the members of a merism are, by definition, comprehensive, opposites which imply “everything in between” (as in the sentence, “He looked high and low for his wallet”), the phrase implies that God begins and completes His work—and *stays with it all the way through*.

The translators of the *Jubilee Bible* catch the essence of the merism in their rendering of Isaiah 41:4: “I the LORD, the first, and I, Myself am with those who are last.” God brackets time. Looking at time narrowly or broadly—from an individual’s perspective or a historical one—God is always there for His people (Hebrews 13:5).

A far less obvious expression of these same opposites—first and last—appears in the biblical usage of two verbs, one Hebrew, the other Greek. Ferreting out the implicit merism stated in these two verbs is at once interesting and instructive.

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Christ’s quotation of Psalm 8:2, recorded in His words in Matthew 21:16, provides the lynchpin of the implied merism. We will look at both passages, beginning with Christ’s source material in Psalm 8: “From the mouths of little children and infants, You have built a fortress against your opponents . . .” [*GOD’S WORD Translation (GWT)*]. The Hebrew verb translated “built” is *yacad*.² *Yacad*, which means “to found” or “to begin,” is the verb that corresponds to the first member of the implied “first-last” merism. It relates to the concept of first.

We find the second member of this implied “first-last” merism in Matthew 21:16,³ where Christ quotes Psalm 8:2 at the time of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem:

. . . and they said to Him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,

‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise?’”

In Christ’s quotation, the Greek verb translated “prepared” is *katartizo*,⁴ whose meaning we will examine more fully in Part Two. *Katartizo* is the verb that corresponds to the second member of the implied “first-last” merism, relating to the concept of last.

So, the “first-last” merism is implied in the Hebrew verb *yacad* and the Greek verb *katartizo*, respectively.

***Yacad*—The Beginning**

Here in Part One, we will focus on the Hebrew verb *yacad*. To begin, we will consider the context of Christ’s quotation, Psalm 8:2-4 (GWT):

From the mouths of little children and infants, You have built [*yacad*] a fortress against your opponents to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I look at Your heavens, the creation of Your fingers, the moon and the stars that You have set in place—what is a mortal that You remember him or the Son of Man that You take care of Him?

Two themes unfold in this passage:

- God’s *initial* creation, the work of His fingers. This sense, we will see, is the thrust of *yacad*.

- God’s ongoing maintenance of His creation, in this case, His attending to the needs of mortals as well as “the Son of Man.” In Part Two, we will find this “dressing and keeping” aspect of His work (see Genesis 2:15) to be the major part of the meaning of *katartizo*.

With the idea of initial creation in mind, we need to sharpen the focus of *yacad*, the Hebrew verb behind the word “built” in Psalm 8:2. According to Gesenius’ *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, the *-cad* of *yacad* is related to Sanskrit *sad*, meaning “to sit,” as well as to the English infinitive “to set.” Hence, the root *cad* informs the English idioms “set a table” or “set a foundation,”⁵ or letting concrete or glue “set.”

Yacad means “to build,” “to found,” “to establish,” or, as it most commonly appears in the King James Version, “to lay a foundation.” Most importantly, in its uses in the Old Testament, it carries the idea of “beginning” or “founding.” Do not contractors build the foundation of a building first—before the roof garden? Yes, there are design activities before construction, followed by soil tests and excavation, but it is not the rooftop heliport the workmen build first. It is the foundation.

Consider it in terms of the “setting” of a concrete sidewalk. Such a walkway might last for years if its owner cares for it competently: if he power-washes it from time to time and ensures that encroaching tree roots do not undermine it—slow but sure. Those things—and more—constitute ongoing maintenance activities. But all those activities would not even be possible if the sidewalk’s concrete had not cured properly, that is, had not set up. That “setting” process is part of the *initial* creation of the sidewalk, on day one, one could say. The setting of the concrete takes place at the beginning. The following scriptures help us catch the meaning of *yacad*:

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- Exodus 9:18. This first use of *yacad* clearly illustrates the concept of beginning. The general context is Egypt's seventh plague: “So, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever happened in Egypt since the beginning of its history” (GWT). God is referring to the time He “set up” Egypt as a nation, its founding.
- I Kings 6:37. The New King James Version approaches this passage from a literal perspective, using the noun *foundation*, although that noun does not appear in the Hebrew text: “In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, in the month of Ziv.” The *Contemporary English Version* (CEV) catches the sense of *yacad* better: “Work began on the temple during Ziv, the second month of the year . . .”
- Zechariah 12:1. *The Voice* manages to catch the essential meaning of *yacad* by avoiding terms like “laid the foundation” of the earth: “This is the message with which the Eternal burdened His prophet concerning Israel—the Eternal One, who began existence [*yacad*] by stretching out the sky and founding the earth.”
- Isaiah 48:13. The CEV (and at least ten other versions⁶) gets to the heart of this scripture by translating *yacad* as “founded”: “My hand founded the earth; My strong hand spread out the heavens. When I call to them, they all stand up.”
- Job 38:4. Here, God asks Job: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” The translators rendered *yacad* with the three English words, “laid the foundation,” even though the Hebrew noun for “foundation” does not appear in the original text at all. The sense is that of a beginning. The *New Life Version* better mines the meaning of *yacad* by rendering verse 4, “Where were you when I began building the earth?”
- I Kings 16:34. By way of background, after God miraculously handed Jericho to the children of Israel, Joshua cursed the city, prophesying that the person who rebuilt its foundations would do so at the cost of his eldest son (Joshua 6:26). I Kings 16:34 is a historical footnote, capping the ancient story of Jericho: “During Ahab's time, Hiel from Bethel rebuilt the town of Jericho. When Hiel started work on the city, his oldest son Abiram died” (*Easy-to-Read Version*). The term “started work” is the paraphraser's rendering of *yacad*, indicating initial action, a beginning.
- Zechariah 4:9. *The Message* handles this occurrence of *yacad* well: “After that, the Word of God came to me: ‘Zerubbabel started [*yacad*] rebuilding this Temple and he will complete it.’”
- Zechariah 8:9. As the last example, note this translation from the *Living Bible*:

The Lord Almighty says, “Get on with the job and finish it! You have been listening long enough! For since you began laying the foundation [*yacad*] of the Temple, the prophets have been telling you about the blessings that await you when it's finished.”

The Founded Foundation

Isaiah 28:16, a well-known passage by virtue of its citation by Paul in Romans 9:33 and by Peter in I Peter 2:6, provides an instructive usage of *yacad*:

Therefore the Lord God said: “Look, I have laid a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; the one who believes will be unshakable.” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*)

Yacad is present in this passage, but not in the words “I have laid a stone.” It is hiding elsewhere. Let us flush it out.

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The term “sure foundation” is *yacad muwcad* in Hebrew. *Muwcad*⁷ is one of the Hebrew nouns for “foundation.” The *-cad* of *muwcad* is the same *-cad* of *yacad*. So, the root *cad* appears twice in the phrase. Most translators render *yacad muwcad* as “firm foundation” or “sure foundation,” which is not incorrect. The term “sure foundation” stresses strength and resolute integrity, implying that the foundation is reliable, fit for supporting the building.⁸ As such, it is an *acceptable* translation.

However, “sure foundation” is neither the preferable nor the best translation. We have seen that the thrust behind the root *cad* is “beginning” or “founding.” So, the best way in English to catch the Hebrew words’ meaning and flavor is to render *yacad muwcad* as “a founded foundation.” That is precisely what one translation, the *Lexham English Bible*, insightfully does.

The difference in emphasis between “sure foundation” and “founded foundation” is marked. The translator’s use of a past participial phrase (that is, “founded foundation”) stresses that an unnamed “someone” established the foundation.

We, of course, understand that “someone” to be God. From the beginning, He established Christ as the foundation. That was part and parcel of the Father’s plan from the outset. This role the Father played in establishing Christ is essential, and it is a concept we will revisit in Part Three when we look at the use of *katartizo* in Hebrews 10:4-5.

But, before we get there, we need to “lay a foundation” of understanding regarding *yacad*’s Greek counterpart, *katartizo*. That will be the subject of Part Two.

End Notes

1 Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations are from the *English Standard Version*.

2 *Yacad* is *Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon* #3245. It appears 42 times.

3 As a parallel passage, see Mark 1:19.

4 *Katartizo*, which appears 13 times, is *Strong’s Greek Lexicon* #2675. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, renders *yacad* as *katartizo* in Psalms 8:2.

5 However, it is a more acceptable in English idiom to refer to “laying a foundation.”

6 Other English versions that replace the formula “laid the foundation” with the verb *founded* include the *Amplified Bible*, the American (1899) *Douay-Rheims*, the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, the *Jubilee Bible 2000*, the *Lexham English Bible*, the *New American Standard Bible*, the *New English Translation*, the *Tree of Life Version*, the *Wycliffe Bible*, and *Young’s Literal Translation*.

7 *Muwcad* (*Strong’s* #1443) appears only twice in the Old Testament: II Chronicles 8:16 and Isaiah 28:16.

8 The apostle Paul completes the analogy in I Corinthians 3:10-15 (*Good News Translation*):

Using the gift that God gave me, I did the work of an expert builder and laid the foundation, and someone else is building on it. But each of you must be careful how you build. For God has already placed Jesus Christ as the one and only foundation, and no other foundation can be laid. Some will use gold or silver or precious stones in building on the foundation; others will use wood or grass or straw. And the quality of each person’s work will be seen when the Day of Christ exposes it. For on that Day fire will reveal everyone’s work; the fire will test it and show its real quality. If what was built on the foundation survives the fire, the builder will receive a reward. But if your work is burnt up, then you will lose it; but you yourself will be saved, as if you had escaped through the fire.

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From Start to Finish (Part Two)

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“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” (Luke 6:40)

As we saw in Part One, the Hebrew verb *yacad* means “to begin” or “to found.” In [Matthew 21:16](#), the apostle Matthew quotes Christ as He, in turn, quotes [Psalm 8:2](#): “From the mouths of little children and infants, You have built a fortress against Your opponents . . .” ([Psalm 8:2](#); *GOD’S WORD Translation*).

The Greek verb Matthew uses in [Matthew 21:16](#) is *katartizo*.¹ The *English Standard Version*² renders it as the verb “prepared”: “Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise . . .”

At this point, the reader may be inclined to ask this question, as I did: What connection did Matthew see between Hebrew *yacad* and Greek *katartizo*?

As we will see, *katartizo* means many things, but neither “to found” nor “to begin” is among its many connotations. Not at all. Yes, the translators of the Septuagint indeed rendered *yacad* as *katartizo* in [Psalm 8:2](#). But to say that Matthew³ blindly cribbed the Septuagint, copying down the word *katartizo* without thought when he penned his gospel, is to miss one vital point. Although Matthew probably did not know it when he wrote his gospel, God certainly knew that he was writing a book that would ultimately become part of the canon, inspired Scripture. God, therefore, took an active role in the selection and treatment of source material, as well as in the choice of words. This fact suggests that *katartizo* is not a wrong word but one approved by God. The fact that *katartizo* appears fourteen other times in the New Testament bespeaks God’s approval, as well.

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Yet, the fact remains: The meaning of *katartizo* does not map well against *yacad*. It would be unfair to say that the two verbs are “nuanced” differently, for, in actuality, not only their connotations but their denotations too are quite dissimilar, as we will presently see. God oversaw the selection of words, permitting the use of *katartizo* to make a point—or several.

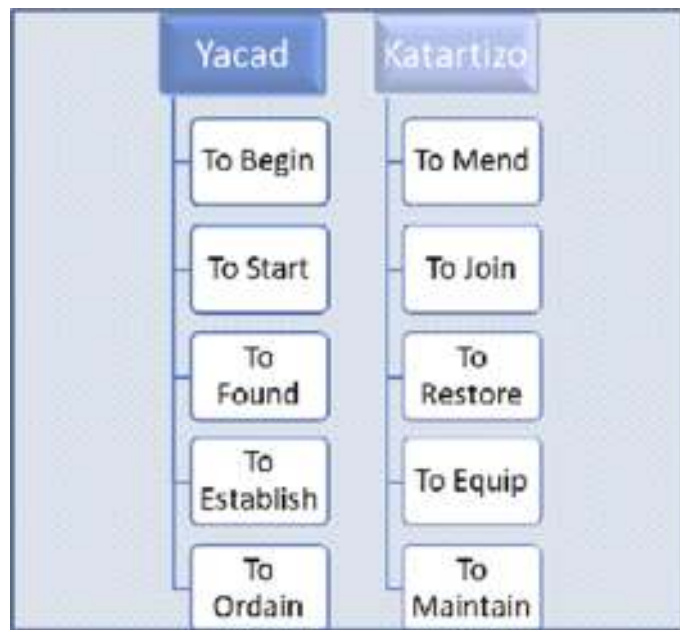
One of those points is that the two verbs, dissimilar as they are in meaning, *when taken together*, carry the notion of first and last, beginning and ending, start and finish. As such, the *yacad-katartizo* dichotomy becomes a striking figure—the merism mentioned in Part One—encompassing God’s working with His creation and with humanity.

A discussion of *katartizo* is in order.

Mending Nets and Restoring Attitudes

Matthew 4:21 contains the first occurrence of *katartizo*: “And going on from there [Jesus] saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and He called them.” The Greek verb translated “mending” is *katartizo*, appearing a total of fifteen times in the New Testament. Notably, John and James were not observed in the act of making or building their nets—not creating them, not founding them, not beginning them. This passage does not carry the idea of “beginning” at all, a notion we saw repeatedly associated with *yacad* in Part One.

Instead, the fishermen were *re-creating* their nets. That is, they were *restoring* them. Under the weight of water and fidgety, frightened fish, the strands making up a net naturally give way over time. Hoisting the net from the water, sometimes heavily loaded, full of fish, only increases the stress on the strands—and the net rips. As time wears on, this disintegration process renders even the most substantial net worthless. If Zebedee and his two sons were to remain in business, they needed to mend nets constantly. It was a cost of doing business. By analogy, it was their way of tending the garden.⁴



Although the translators of the Septuagint translated *yacad* as *katartizo* in Psalm 8:2, the meanings of the two verbs do not map against each other particularly well.

Pure and simple: The idea behind *katartizo* is ongoing maintenance and restoration. This first use of the verb presents a concrete, easy-to-grasp picture of the meaning of *katartizo*.

While most of us do not mend nets today, we all understand the principle of entropy: Things wear out. Women mend their children’s damaged clothing. Men maintain their cars, which may mean crawling under the hood at times to perform major maintenance, repairing fatigued parts, putting the vehicle in operating order as part of preparing for a trip. Many of us do this in preparation for the Feast of Tabernacles. Doing so, we are not creating or building the car—the manufacturer has already done that. Rather, we are, in essence, making the car “fit” for the trip. This distinction is the heart of the meaning of *katartizo*.

When a person mends a net, he joins loose ends together. That action of joining forms another basic idea behind the verb *katartizo*. It deserves comment here. The apostle Paul writes the members of the church at Corinth: “I beg you . . . by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree with each other and not be split into groups. I beg that you be completely joined together by having the same kind of thinking and the same purpose” (1 Corinthians 1:10; *New Century Version*). Here, it takes three English words to carry the idea of the one Greek verb, *katartizo*: “completely joined together.” Perfectly fit together or perfectly united. If strands

of God’s net become disjoined—separated for any reason—He, like a good fisherman, can take remedial, restorative action, mending the net.

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So, *katartizo* means “to maintain,” with the implication of restoring what has broken or degenerated. Notice Paul’s admonition to us all, recorded near the end of the epistle in II Corinthians 13:11: “And that’s about it, friends. Be cheerful. Keep things in good repair. Keep your spirits up” (*The Message*). The paraphrasers rendered *katartizo* as, “Keep things in good repair.”

In this case, we, God’s people, are to do the ongoing mending, that is, to maintain things (for example, good attitudes). Other translations of this passage urge Christians to “mend your ways,” “put yourselves in order,” “aim for restoration,” “repair whatever is broken,” or “set things right.” The focus of *katartizo* is plainly not initial creation, not founding or beginning, as is the case with *yacad*. Rather, *katartizo* carries the thrust of restoration and maintenance.

Other Shades of Meaning

Galatians 6:1 provides another example but with a different emphasis. Here, we are to help restore other Christians who are in difficulty. Unlike Cain, we are to serve as our brother’s keepers⁵: “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore [*katartizo*] him in a spirit of gentleness.”

In I Thessalonians 3:10, Paul shades *katartizo* a bit differently. In this context, the apostle reminds the congregation of God at Thessalonica that he and Timothy “pray very hard night and day that we may see you again face to face.” Why? “So that we may equip you with whatever is lacking in your faith” (*International Standard Version*). The verb “equip” is *katartizo*. *The Amplified Bible* actually employs the mending metaphor, which we saw in the first use of *katartizo*, by including the gloss, “mend and make good whatever may be lacking.” Other versions use the verb “restore” or “supply” whatever may be needed. Paul points out that the ministry has a responsibility—and, by implication, the ability—to restore a congregation to spiritual health, as much as possible.

The King James Version (and about ten other versions, usually older ones⁶) translate *katartizo*, as it appears in I Thessalonians 3:10, with the verb “perfect.” For instance, the *Modern English Version* renders it, “night and day praying earnestly that we might see your face and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith . . .”

The root word of *katartizo* informs these translations. That root is *artios*, an adjective that means “perfect.”⁷ It appears only once in the New Testament, in II Timothy 3:17: “That the man of God may be perfect [*artios*], thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (*Blue Red and Gold Letter Edition*). *The Amplified Bible, Classic Edition* handles II Timothy 3:17 this way, glossing *artios* as “complete and proficient”: “So that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Thayer’s *Greek Lexicon* comments that *artios* has reference “apparently to ‘special aptitude for given uses.’” *Artios* carries the idea of being especially “fitted out” for a purpose or being “complete to carry out a special purpose.” Other translations use the adjectives “competent” or “fully qualified.” In the context of II Timothy 3:17, Paul says that God’s Word can make us completely able to carry out His work, competent for the task. The Scriptures provide all we need to make us fit for the work He has assigned us. And, returning once more to I Thessalonians 3:10, Paul and Timothy, meeting again with the people, will be able to supply everything they need spiritually.⁸ Hence, *katartizo* implicitly speaks to the fact that God will provide, the meaning of one of His names, *YHWH-Jireh* (Genesis 22:14).

In most of these examples, God’s people or His ministers do the mending, restoration, and equipping. In Part Three, we will examine some uses of *katartizo* that clearly draw attention to the role *God* plays in providing ongoing maintenance, not only to His creation but to us, His New Creation.

End Notes

¹ *Katartizo* has the same usage in the parallel passage, Mark 1:19.

² Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations are from the *English Standard Version*.

³ There is good reason to believe that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, not Greek. It follows, then, that another person, unknown to us, later translated Matthew’s Hebrew into Greek. If that is the case, then it was not Matthew himself, but his subsequent translator, who opted to use the Septuagint’s verb, *katartizo*. Without any doubt, Christ used neither *yacad* nor *katartizo*, as He almost certainly spoke in the vernacular of His day, Aramaic.

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⁴ Genesis 2:5: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

⁵ Compare Genesis 4:9: “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Where is Abel your brother?’ He said, ‘I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?’”

⁶ Versions that make use of the verb “perfect” include *21st Century King James Version*, the *American Standard Version*, the *Blue, Red and Gold Letter Edition*, the *Darby Translation*, the *New King James Version*, the *World English Bible*, and *Young’s Literal Translation*. Versions approaching the Greek by using the adjective “imperfect” include *The Amplified Bible, Classic Edition*, and *The New Testament in Modern English*.

⁷ *Artios*, a *hapax legomenon*, is *Strong’s #737*. Importantly, *artios* is not related to another Greek word carrying the idea of perfection, the adjective *teleios* (*Strong’s #5046*), used 17 times in the New Testament. *Teleios* means “perfect,” “finished,” “wanting nothing.” Its first use is Matthew 5:48: “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

⁸ Luke 6:40 is another example where the translators, especially the older ones, employed the verb “perfect” in rendering *katartizo*. An example of a newer translation doing so is the New King James Version: “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” The verb “perfectly trained” is *katartizo*.

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“You are not ill-equipped or slighted on any necessary gifts as you patiently anticipate the day when our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One, is revealed. Until that final day, He will preserve you; and on that day, He will consider you faultless.” —I Corinthians 1:7-8 (The Voice)

The Greek verb *katartizo* took center stage in Part Two. We saw there that the kernel of its meaning relates to restoration and maintenance. As such, it shares little semantic space with *yacad* (meaning “to begin” or “to found”), the Hebrew verb that the translators of the Septuagint (the Old Testament in Greek) translated as *katartizo* in Psalms 8:2. We looked at the use of *katartizo* in several New Testament contexts, showing how individuals have a responsibility to maintain a good relationship with God and man.

Part Three will demonstrate that God Himself has taken on the roles of Restorer and Maintainer, the verb *katartizo* applying to Him as well as to His people. We will survey that verb, which corresponds to the second member of the “first-last” merism, showing how it pertains to God’s ongoing maintenance of His creation and His people—to the very last.

Hebrews 11:3¹ offers us a glimpse of God’s work of restoration during Creation week: “By faith we understand that the worlds [ages] were framed by the word of God . . .” (*New King James Version* [NKJV]). The translators, taking their cue from the translators of the original King James Version (KJV), rendered *katartizo* as “framed.” The *Amplified Bible, Classic Edition* (AMPC) adds an instructive gloss: “By faith we understand that the worlds . . . were framed (fashioned, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose) by the word of God . . .”

Any number of other versions renders *katartizo* in this passage with the verbs *created*, *made*, or *formed*. In doing so, they miss the gist of the meaning of *katartizo*. What did God *really* do during Creation Week? He *restored* what Satan had spoiled. He mended it. Further, in terms of the meaning of *katartizo*, it is crucial to be aware of just what that restoration entailed.

For God not only restored the creation, but He *added* to it. He added elements that were not present before. This adding of value is a crucial part of the meaning of *katartizo*. The geological record indicates that God added plants that were nonexistent before His restoration. He also added animals that apparently were not present before Satan befouled the face of the earth. Then, He added man, who had not walked on its surface before. Finally, He created the Sabbath for man: “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath’” (Mark 2:27). So, if we stop to think about it, God added the Sabbath as well.

In our own experience, the act of restoration often includes adding value; we strive to make the new better than the original. For example, when people restore an old house, they do more than paint and clean. They frequently add new features, such as an expanded closet, another bathroom, upgraded electrical wiring, or a picture window in the living room.

When I was a teenager, my pals and I were never pleased to accept a car as it came to us. We felt compelled to install an aftermarket steering wheel, a new suspension, an upgraded radio, or a four-barrel carburetor. If we could afford it, we would fit the vehicle with a new engine. We were well advised to do so, as God tells us to dress and keep the garden—er, car. And, of course, that dressing included a new paint job, right? *Katartizo* defines all that activity to which modern boys are almost naturally driven. We were equipping our cars to make them fit for the work we wanted them to perform.

We realize, of course, that God did more than restore His physical creation. Peter’s comments in I Peter 5:10 indicate that He restores *us* as well, His New Creation²: “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” The English verb “restore” is a translation of *katartizo*.³ Restoration is one of four works of grace God performs on our behalf. Just as God “turned His attention to Noah” and the animals on the ark (Genesis 8:1, *The Message*), so He is also at all times attentive to His people’s needs.⁴

With that thought in mind, notice how the AMPC glosses Hebrews 13:20-21. This passage forms the benediction at the end of the book of Hebrews:

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Now may the God of peace . . . Who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood [that sealed . . .] the everlasting . . . (covenant, . . .), strengthen (complete, perfect) *and* make you what you ought to be *and* equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will; [while He Himself] works in you *and* accomplishes that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ (the Messiah); to Whom be the glory forever and ever . . . Amen.

This interpretation indicates how attentive God is to us, how completely He equips us or fits us out, as it were, with everything we need. It is fair to conclude, as we reflect on the physical creation, which was, by God’s assessment, “very good,”⁵ that His ongoing maintenance of His New Creation is high quality, first-rate through and through. He spares nothing to give us what we need.



Before we are born, God graciously gifts us by creating our bodies as it pleases Him, complete with the talents and abilities we need to carry out the work He has for us to do. He is just as gracious in His attentive care of us throughout our lives, restoring and maintaining us as we go along. It is in this concept of gifting that the meanings of *yacad* (to begin) and *katartizo* (to restore) converge.

God’s Work of Gifting His People

All this hints at an essential concept behind the verb *katartizo*. God’s work to maintain and restore, to equip and fit, is a work of gifting. Hebrews 10:4-5, a loose quotation of Psalms 40:6-7, nicely demonstrates the scriptural link between gifting and maintaining:

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, He said,

“Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but a body have You prepared for Me . . .”

The verb *prepared* is *katartizo*. Though a bit weak in this context, the translator’s use of this verb is by no means inaccurate. After all, when a fisherman mends his nets, he is *preparing* them for the next day’s work. When a person fixes his car for the trip to the Feast, he is preparing it, making it ready, and, hopefully, roadworthy, for the journey, suitable for the trip.

However, other translations strengthen the impact of verse 5 by using less oblique language, such as “made ready” or “made fit,” as in the translation proffered by the AMPC:

Hence, when He [Christ] entered into the world, He said,

“Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but instead You have made ready [*katartizo*] a body for Me [to offer] . . .”

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Nevertheless, by far the most adequate translations of verse five are those that regard this “preparation” as a gift from God, a gift to make us ready, fit, adequate to the task. The *Contemporary English Version* puts Hebrews 10:5 this way: “Sacrifices and offerings are not what You want, but You have given [*katartizo*] Me My body.”

The *New Living Translation’s* offering is even more searching:

That is why, when Christ came into the world, He said to God,

“You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But You have given [*katartizo*] Me a body to offer.”

The underlying concept, importantly, involves the Fatherhood of God. The Father gave a body to Christ, something human fathers do for their children as well. In all likelihood, God’s action of giving Christ a body fit for sacrifice is akin to His establishing Him as a “founded foundation,” discussed in Part One. Christ’s sacrifice for sin was efficacious because God founded His body and Spirit.

Does God also gift us, His children, with a body appropriate for the work He has set for us? Does His attention to us extend that far back to our beginnings? In answering these questions, Psalm 139:15 becomes germane. The psalmist says of God: “When my bones were being formed, carefully put together in my mother’s womb, when I was growing there in secret, You knew that I was there . . .” (*Good News Translation*).

The evidence is unmistakable: God also formed our bodies—wove them, as the KJV has it. Even before we were born, God was building for us a body, gifting us with the talents and abilities we would use as we later became living sacrifices for Him.⁶ That, too, is all part and parcel of the meaning of *katartizo*.

In fact, it is in the gifting of God—in His prescient “founding” of our bodies before we were born and, in the attentiveness, He shows us throughout life—that the disparate meanings of *yacad* and *katartizo* begin to converge.⁷

Time and Space Bracket the Race

Taking the usages of the two verbs together, *yacad* in the Old Testament and *katartizo* in the New, what we see is subtle merism. It is not an obvious one, like “in and out,” “up and down,” or “first and last,” but a merism nonetheless: the beginning and the end, with—as is common with merisms—everything included in between. *Yacad*: The work God started at the beginning, the founding. *Katartizo*: The work He continues to do and will continue to do until the end. Together, the two verbs cover the gamut of God’s work. They show God as the Founder and Maintainer of His creation, the Giver and Sustainer of all life.

When I was an undergraduate, I ran the 440-yard dash⁸ for exercise. It is a quarter-mile dash, a sprint race. One thing that beats on your consciousness during a race is the bracket of space, as officials fastidiously measure distances. Each lane: 440 yards, 1,320 feet—not an inch more or less. There is also the time bracket: For sure, a runner had better not leave those starting blocks early. Officials are everywhere, one eye glued to the athletes, the other to their certified timepieces. They virtually embody the brackets of time and space, the defining brackets of any race.

A prevalent figure in Paul’s writing is that of a race. For example, he tells the members of the churches located around Galatia, recorded in Galatians 5:7: “You were running the race beautifully. Who cut in on you and stopped you from obeying the truth?” (*International Standard Version* [ISV]). The same apostle tells us when our spiritual race began in Ephesians 1:3-4:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

The gun sounded for us somewhere before the creation of the *kosmos*. Unlike in the 440 I ran, we did not hear the report of the starting gun, but we did hear our calling later, in the fullness of time.

In Philippians 1:5-6,⁹ Paul indicates when that most-important race will end:

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I thank God for the joy we share in telling the good news from the very first day until now. God began to do a good work in you. And I am sure that He will keep on doing it until He has finished it. He will keep on until the day Jesus Christ comes again. (*Worldwide English New Testament*)

The NKJV puts it, “until the day of Jesus Christ.” It is clear from Luke 17:24 (and other scriptures) that that day is the day of His return: “For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in His day.”

God’s work in us is indeed one of *yacad* combined with *katartizo*. He began it before we were born. In addition, He performs an ongoing work of maintenance, adding value, restoring, repairing, preparing, equipping, perfecting the New Man, gifting him with everything he needs to bring him successfully to the Day of Christ—to the resurrection of the just. He started the work, and He will finish it. He is indeed the First and the Last.

In I Corinthians 1:7-9, *The Message* summarizes the matter in characteristically everyday English:

Just think—you don’t need a thing; you’ve got it all! All God’s gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale. And not only that, but God Himself is right alongside to keep you steady and on track until things are all wrapped up by Jesus. God, who got you started in this spiritual adventure, shares with us the life of His Son and our Master Jesus. He will never give up on you. Never forget that.

End Notes

1 Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations are from the *English Standard Version* (ESV).

2 See II Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” See also Galatians 6:15.

3 The implications of Peter’s choice of the Greek verb translated “establish” in the ESV is important. *His choice demonstrates that Peter did not consider yacad to be synonymous with katartizo*. To him, they had separate meanings. A close look at his choice of verb for the fourth member of the four-member series of verbs in I Peter 5:10, the verb translated “establish,” makes this clear.

Let’s establish the connection between *katartizo* (translated “restore” in the ESV) and *themelioo* (translated “establish” in the ESV) of I Peter 5:10. Both are members of the four-member series of verbs appearing in I Peter 5:10: 1) Restore, 2) Confirm, 3) Strengthen, and 4) Establish. *Katartizo* is the first member of the four-member series, while *themelioo* is the fourth member of that series. Importantly: In separate quotations from the Old Testament, *both Greek verbs appear as yacad*. That is, indirectly, *yacad* appears *twice* in the series of verbs appearing in I Peter 5:10, as delineated below.

Old Testament Passage	New Testament Passage
<u>Psalm 8:2</u> : “You have built [<i>yacad</i>] a fortress against your opponents . . .” (<i>God’s Word Translation</i> [GWT])	<u>Matthew 21:16</u> : “You have prepared [<i>katartizo</i>] praise . . .” (ESV)
<u>Psalm 102:25</u> : “Of old You laid the foundation [<i>yacad</i>] of the earth . . .” (ESV)	<u>Hebrews 1:10</u> : “You, LORD, laid the foundation [<i>themelioo</i>] of the earth in the beginning . . .” (ESV)

The context of the catalog in I Peter 5:10 is a coordinate list, that is, four verbs of equal value but of different meaning. Thematically, the series does not consist of synonyms, but of verbs with diverse senses. If Peter had intended *themelioo* to be a synonym of the first member of the catalog, *katartizo* (that is, if he used those two verbs appositionally), he would have listed *themelioo* immediately after *katartizo*, according to the conventions of Greek (and incidentally, English) grammar. He would not have separated the two verbs (*katartizo* . . . *themelioo*) by two other verbs that are clearly not synonyms. All this argues that Peter saw *katartizo* and *themelioo* as having *different* meanings.

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Interestingly, the apostle listed *themelioo*, which has the implication of initial action (laying a foundation), last rather than first in the series.

Themelioo (*Strong’s* #2311) means “to lay a foundation,” “to found,” and by implication, “to establish” or “to settle” as to settle a new town. It appears six times in the New Testament (Matthew 7:25, “founded”; Luke 6:48, “laid the foundation”; Ephesians 3:17, “grounded”; Colossians 1:23, “grounded”; Hebrews 1:10, “laid the foundation”; and I Peter 5:10, “establish”). As the table above indicates, *themelioo*’s use in Hebrews 1:10 cross-references with *yacad* in that it is a quotation of Psalms 102:25: “Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.” In Hebrew, the term “laid the foundation” is *yacad*.

In Luke 6:48, the root word of *themelioo* is also present, *themelios* (*Strong’s* #2310), which means “foundation.” This noun is generally translated “foundation” in I Corinthians 3:10-12.

The ramification of Peter’s use of *katartizo* and *themelioo* appearing in a series of coordinate verbs is important. His use of these two verbs as member one (*katartizo*) and member four (*themelioo*) in a four-verb list indicates that he did *not* consider them to be synonymous. The context makes that clear. To Peter, *katartizo* does not semantically map to *yacad*. It has a separate meaning, “to restore,” as detailed in my wider remarks. *Themelioo* appears to be the verb of choice in the New Testament when the intended meaning pertains to “found” or to “lay a foundation,” and therefore more closely aligns with the Hebrew *yacad*. This is one of the clearest arguments that *katartizo* in the New Testament does not mean the same as *yacad* in the Old Testament. If one is looking for a one-to-one correlation between a Hebrew verb and its Greek counterpart, the best bet is to look at the *yacad-themelioo* pairing.

4 The Hebrew verb *zakar* (*Strong’s* #2142) first appears in Genesis 8:1. It is used 233 times in the Old Testament. One of its meanings is “to be mindful” as in Psalms 115:12 (*New American Standard Bible*): “The Lord has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.”

Zakar is the verb “remembered” in Psalms 8:4, discussed in Part One in reference to God’s “taking care of” people. That care, of course, implies His restoration and maintenance of us: “[W]hat is man that you take notice of him, or the son of man that you pay attention to him?” (ISV).

5 Genesis 1:31: “And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”

6 See Romans 12:1: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

7 From what I can determine, only five versions of the New Testament stress the idea of founding or beginning in their translations of Matthew 21:16. In doing so, importantly, they indicate the subtle convergence between the meanings of *yacad* and *katartizo*. Other versions tend to use verbs such as “perfected,” “prepared,” and the like. The five versions that use the verb “create” (or its synonyms) are as follows:

- *The Expanded Bible’s* text of Matthew 21:16 glosses *katartizo* with the words “prepared/created praise,” thereby connecting the Greek verb with the notion of founding or beginning.
- The GWT renders Matthew 21:16 as, “From the mouths of little children and infants, you have created praise’?”
- The ISV renders Matthew 21:16 as, “From the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have created praise’?”
- The *Names of God Version* translates Matthew 21:16 as, “From the mouths of little children and infants, you have created praise’?”

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- George Lamsa’s translation of the *Peshitta* treats Matthew 21:16 as, “You have composed a song?” The verb *compose* is a semantically specialized form of “created” when referring to music (or writing). Hence, this version also catches the notion of founding or creating, the idea behind *yacad*.

8 It has more recently been recalibrated as the 400-meter race.

9 Compare Psalm 138:8: “The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.”

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Iron Sharpening Iron
New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: From Start to Finish
Article by Charles Whitaker
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

The author of this article lost me on Part Three when he started to teach the gap theory. There is an excellent article by Jonathan Sarfati called “The Gap Theory” which can be found in Issue #59.

There are many reasons why the gap theory should not be taught. The main reason is that it is not in the bible and Charles Whitaker had to explain 2 words in great detail in parts one and two before he could even try to get us to believe in a gap theory in part 3. I have no doubt that the two words mean what he says they mean but to then use them to prove a gap theory is a stretch with summer salts added to the mix.

The gap theory is just that, a theory made up by some guy and spread around the world. The whole idea of the theory was to bring creation and evolution together. In Genesis the words used are made and create. In other words, it was a new creation that God made. No place in scripture does it ever say that God re-created the earth or anything on it.

If you believe in the gap theory, then you do not believe what God inspired to be written in the following verse as well as other verses which use the words “made” and “create” interchangeably.

Exo 20:11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

There is another major problem with the gap theory, which is that death came before sin and we know that is not true from many other scriptures. If the earth and everything on it was a re-creation in Genesis because Satan destroyed the earth and the dinosaurs or what ever other creatures you believe lived before Genesis one, then death came before sin.

Also, the angels were created on day four of creation week, so that means Satan did not exist before the first day of creation week as many want to believe. The scripture that says they were created on day four is in the apocrypha and I have used the scripture in the newsletter before I just could not find it for this.

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Even if you do not believe the angels were created on day four, the following scripture clearly says:

Exo 20:11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

That would also include the angels since He made all that is in heaven and earth in six days and rested on the seventh day.

So, don't believe the gap theory being taught in this article because there is no gap theory in the bible and when God says he created everything in those six days, I believe Him, don't you?

Holy Days 2023

Passover – April 6, 2023 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 6-12, 2023

Pentecost – May 26, 2023

Trumpets - September 16, 2023

Atonement – September 25, 2023

Tabernacles –September 30, 2023 to October 6, 2023

Last Great Day – October 7, 2023

Notes