

Creation Vs. Evolution Part 2 In The Image Of God

Following on from our last study I would like to explore what the bible says about man and why we are different from the rest of creation. We last time by looking at how God created everything and how, in chapter one of genesis, His creation narrative reaches it's pinnacle on the sixth day with the creation of man, now let's remind ourselves of what God says.

Genesis 1:26-31

When an artist signs his work he is making a statement that this is his work and it belongs to no one else. In the same way, when God created the universe God left His undeniable signature on His creation, this is God's work and it belongs to no one else (see Psalm 19), and here in this passage we see His signature on man. In Vs.26 we have the use of the plural, "*let us make man,*" this is the first indication of the Tri-unity of the Godhead which is fully revealed in the N.T. Here, the verse goes on to say, "*in our image, after our likeness.*" This has been debated as to whether God is addressing the divine council of heaven, or whether He is speaking as the Triune Godhead. I believe that while the host of heaven (angels) may have witnessed creation, God is speaking as the Godhead because only the Godhead have the power to create life (see Neh. 9:6 & Heb. 1:1-3).

By making man in His image God is granting man the authority to rule the earth as His representative. But what does that mean? It means that we are to rule God's creation as He would rule, in righteousness and justice. God uses the words, "image" and "likeness", and there is a difference. We are made in God's image which means that there is a part of us that reflects the character of God. Although God is far superior to us, we do however possess some of His characteristics. God is intelligent, emotional, moral and loving in His perfect being. We too have intelligence, morals and emotions. But apart from these qualities, we also have the capacity for holiness. God is altogether Holy, above and apart from us yet he calls us to be holy like Him in both the O.T. and the N.T. (see Lev.11:44 & 1Peter 1:16). Tragically, because of the fall our capacity for holiness has been grossly affected and the image we carry has become tarnished and unfocused. Only through our salvation and restoration to the kingdom of God can it be restored. That was on day six, but let's not forget however that there are seven days in a week, and chapter two of Genesis, which expands on the first, continues the narrative.

Genesis chapter 2:1-3

God has completed His work and now rests on the seventh day. This doesn't mean that God literally stopped doing anything and just rested because if that happened we would cease to exist. The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus upholds all of creation (Heb. 1:3), so if God stopped working the whole universe would implode on itself and everything would be destroyed. What God does here is He provides man with a model for the cycle of work and rest. Note that there is no mention here of an evening and morning, this may possibly be a reference to the eternal rest we will have in God's kingdom. This is, however, the first thing to which God imparts His holiness, setting it apart to Himself. By observing a day of rest (sabbath), we imitate what God has done here and confess His lordship over us. This was given as a sign for the Jews to observe (Ex. 31:13;17), and it is also a foreshadowing of Jesus (Col. 2:16-17), and it is a promise of God's divine rest in heaven (Matt. 11:28).

Verses 4-9

In Vs.4 we have an interesting word in terms of the evolution debate. The word for generations is the word '*towldah*', which means birth or family history. So what God is saying here is, "This is where you and everything else came from, this is your origin and your beginning." From Vs.5-9 God now expands on what he has told us in chapter one as He explains a little about the eco system and the method of creation. He tells us how, in the absence of man to tend to the garden, God created an eco system whereby the plants are watered by a mist that covers the whole of the land.

Then God created man and he did this from the dust of the earth. The Hebrew word for dust is *'aphar* and means a very fine ash like dust and this is the same way animals, birds and every living creature was made (see Vs.19). This signifies for us our ties with the earth. We said before that God created everything perfectly for it's environment and all living creatures, including man, are made to live an earthly existence. The exception is, of course, that man is made to bear the image of God and Vs.7 tells us that God breathed into the man's nostrils. The Hebrew phrase used here, *'nishmath chayyim'*, occurs only this one time in the O.T. Although the other 'living creatures' of chapter 1 possess life, only humanity has life linked to breath from God. This connects human life intrinsically with God, as does the description of humankind as bearing the image of God (1:27). After creating man God placed him in the position between heaven and earth to exercise authority over all creatures as we saw last time. All that God created was in it's adult form, the trees bore fruit, the birds, fish and animals are all told to *"be fruitful and multiply."* (So the next time you are asked, "which came first?" it was the chicken!) Now God says He planted a garden in the East, this signifies the place where the sun rises and represents life and light. This garden was called Eden and was distinguished from the rest of creation and had specific geographical boundaries. The narrative does not say what the rest of the creation was like, only that Eden was the unique dwelling place of God. This garden was a tropical paradise, a place of warmth where Adam could walk around naked in his innocence. It was a place where all of God's creation lived in harmony, and it was the place where God invited man to have fellowship with Him. Evidence of this type of climate is found in fossils from around the world. These fossils show tropical plant life from all around the globe. The fossils show that at one time the whole earth was warm and moist, again this confirms what God tells us here in Genesis. God then places the man in Eden, this place of outstanding beauty contained everything a man could want, food warmth and shelter. In the ancient Near East, garden imagery was used to describe the place where deities lived and were represented by luxury and abundance. These divine living places also represented the place where heaven and earth met. The O.T. often connects trees with divine encounters and sacred geography (21:33; 35:4; Josh 24:26; Judg 4:5; 6:11, 19). The temple of Israel is an example of this as it was decorated in the fashion of a lush garden (1 Kings 6-7).

In the middle of the garden of Eden God placed two particular trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life represented God's intended eternal life for man and as the trees were in the center of the garden, it may be that Adam ate the fruit from this tree that was readily available to him to sustain him. But now, because of the fall, this tree is only available to those who re-enter the garden (heaven) through the second Adam, Jesus (see Rev. 22:1-5).

Verses 10-24

God now creates a river in Eden to water the garden, the river then divides into four. The first two rivers, the Pishon and the Gihon, are now unknown. The name Pishon is probably derived from the verb *'push'*, meaning 'to spring up', and the name of the second river, Gihon, is most likely based on a verb that means 'to burst forth'. The names of both of these unknown rivers describe springs of water bubbling up from underground. The precise location of Havilah is also unknown, but it is mentioned again later in Genesis (10:7 & 29; 25:18). The land of Cush (*kush* in Hebrew) refers to a region of East Africa that most likely included southern Egypt and northern Sudan. The Greek Septuagint as well as some modern translations use 'Ethiopia' to translate the Hebrew *kush*, although the biblical region was probably located further north than modern Ethiopia.

The Tigris river mentioned here, is the eastern of the two great rivers in Mesopotamia (see Dan 10:4). The Euphrates river is the western of the two great rivers in Mesopotamia. The ancient city of Babylon was built near the Euphrates. In Vs.15 God places the man in the garden to cultivate it. This phrase helps us to define the language of subduing and ruling used in chapter 1:28. Man represents God as stewards of His creation and should tend to it as He would. Man is given the power to rule and is in fact told to do so, but he is also instructed to rule appropriately.

In verse 17 God gives man a prohibition concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the whole of creation this is the only unique exclusion given to Adam and it signifies God's sovereign rule over him. When they were created Adam and Eve stood in a moral relationship with God and had a duty of obedience to Him without any rewards or special blessings and the tree represents man, as God's representative, exercising his moral judgement (see 1 Kings 3:9-15).

There is nothing wrong with the tree itself, and there was nothing evil about the fruit of the tree. This is a covenant God is making with Adam and this covenant requires perfect obedience from Adam and the promise of eternal life from God. Disobedience would break the covenant and God would punish disobedience with death. Therefore it is unlikely that the fruit gave Adam and Eve any further knowledge. However, the act of disobedience would spiritually cause harm to man and it is that sin which, as we know, opened Adam's and Eve's eyes to evil. We know from chapter three that they did indeed sin and, as a result of their disobedience, they knew what evil was. They suddenly knew the feeling of shame and they tried to hide from God. Their sin of disobeying God brought corruption into their lives and into the world. Eating the fruit, was an act of disobedience against God, breaking the covenant and giving Adam and Eve the knowledge of evil (sin) and that knowledge caused them to lose their innocence and become ashamed of their nakedness.

In Vs.18 we find the first malediction given by God. Until now everything that God had created was given a benediction, which means a good word (*i.e.* God saw that it was good). Now we have a malediction, meaning a bad word, "*It is not good that man should be alone.*" God knows that loneliness is a terrible thing for man to endure, it has a devastating effect on the mind and the body. Solitary confinement is still considered to be the harshest punishment and it often leaves prisoners with long lasting psychological problems. In fact, people who choose to live isolated lives often die early and also experience psychological and mental health issues.

In babies touch is the first sense to develop within the first three weeks of conception. Around twenty five weeks, virtually all the nerve pathways are in place. At full term the babies sense of touch is highly developed and a babies skin contains millions of sensory receptors with which it makes sense of the world around it. All of the other senses, sight, sound, taste and smell are all derived from the sense of touch. Also, touch is the last sense we lose as we get older. Many older people who live alone experience feelings of disconnection, isolation and a feeling of being unfulfilled. Obviously God knows these things about us and the importance of human companionship and how touch is vital for our psychological, physical and emotional well being, touch is also a vital part of being loved. This one aspect of the human make up is, I believe, a strong enough argument against evolution. There is no evidence of the human body 'happening' by chance, let alone all the intricate workings of the mind and psychology of a human being. The bible is clear on this point we are, "*fearfully and wonderfully made,*" (Psalm 139:13-15) by a God who is infinite in His vision of created beauty.

So God created a 'helper' for Adam, woman. Adam was created first which gave him superiority socially but the woman was created as a companion for Adam, a partner who will also bear the image of God and would compliment his inadequacies and form the perfect partnership in marriage. In fact, the word for 'helper' is a word that includes Adams inadequacy and not the woman's inferiority, it is also a word which is frequently used of God.

Verse 19 tells us how God now prepares Adam for the gift of the woman. God brings every living creature to Adam to be named by him and, as part of his duty as God's representative, Adam names them but in doing so it highlights the fact that Adam is alone. All the creatures have a mate but there is no mate found for Adam (Vs. 20). Now having made Adam aware of his need for a mate God causes him to sleep and takes a rib from Adam to create the woman. (Incidentally, the wide spread story of women having one more rib than men comes from this passage but is not true. It is a medical fact that both men and women have the same amount of ribs. God's infinite wisdom and knowledge doesn't always follow human logic!) Now awake again, Adam is gifted with the woman by God, why did God present the woman in this way? Don't forget that Adam is naming all the creatures and the woman is the last creature to be presented to him for naming.

This gift to Adam of his bride not only addresses the loneliness of Adam, but their partnership (marriage) provides us with the foundations for the laws against adultery (Ex.20:14 & Heb.13:4). It is also a foreshadowing of the type of relationship of Jesus to His church (Eph.5:22-32).

As God's representative Adam has the responsibility to name the woman, this became a tradition in ancient times that the authority to name someone implied the authority to govern them. So Adam calls her woman in Vs.23, which is the only recorded statement we have of Adam before the fall (Adam doesn't name her Eve until after the fall in chapter 3:20).

Adam's priorities now change as he embarks on married life with the woman and his wife now takes precedence. As He institutes marriage, God instructs the couple that the man should “*hold fast*” to his wife. This is the type of language used in the making of a covenant. Therefore, marriage is a covenant whereby the man pledges himself to his wife, this imitates God's relationship to His people. God has pledged Himself to His children as Jesus has pledged Himself to the church. Vs.24 points us to God's intention that marriage is to be monogamous and that by becoming “*one flesh*” the man and woman join in solidarity together. The closing verse 25, shows how God anticipated the fall. Nudity is not idealised here but shows us the devastating effect that the lose of innocence has had on humanity. The tragic consequences of the fall resulted in the man and woman losing their innocence and their identity as God's image bearers becomes tainted and distorted.

This, coupled with the lose of innocence, resulted in a shameful existence where they felt it necessary to try and hide from their Creator. The pain and anguish of shame led them out of the garden paradise with it's lush green plants and ripe fruit on the trees, into a world tainted by sin, a world where they would have to work hard to get food among the brambles and thorns instead of picking it from the trees, a world where instead of them trying to hide from God, God would hide His face from them.

Conclusion

In our debate on Creation V Evolution, we have seen how the majesty of God is supported by His own testimony in chapters one and two of Genesis. Evolutionist offer no hard facts that can either be supported or verified in any way. On the other hand, God offers a clear and concise narrative of creation and how He accomplished it, by the power of His Word. As we said at the beginning of this debate, we can argue the pros and cons of both sides of the debate. But this will leave us with only one question, do you believe God, or do you believe evolution? If you choose to believe evolution you will be left with more questions and theories than when you started. Evolution has no conclusion, evolution scientist are unclear on their theory and their opinions are conflicting and changing continually with no evidence to support it's theories.

God, on the other hand, has the testimony of His word with the support of creation itself. Take time to look at the world around you and see the intricate details of everything there is. All the elements work in perfect harmony to produce an atmosphere that can sustain all life and everything we see and experience cries out to us of the existence of God and His work of creation. Psalm 19 sings the praises of creation and Psalm 148 sings the praises of the Creator.

I will finish with a quote from each side of the debate. Speaking about the debate Charles Darwin said, “...I feel deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton. Let each man hope and believe what he can.”

The last quote is from the Holy Spirit who inspired the Psalmist when he wrote in Psalm 14,
'The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."