**What’s In the Text?**

**Genesis 1:1-2:3**

21st Sunday after Trinity

10.24.2021

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

When Christians talk about things regarding our faith, our life, and anything that affects us, we refer back to the Scriptures. We believe Scripture is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. This means we believe, that in the original languages in which they are written, the books of the Old and New Testament were inspired by God. What is recorded in them is not the thoughts and opinion of those men who penned them, but the Holy Spirit inspired them in such a way that what they recorded was God’s Word. It is without error.

Archeological evidence shows the Scriptures to be historically accurate, as does the evidence coming from the writings of others outside the pale of Christianity.

Today, we have as our Old Testament reading, “The Beginning.” We could sit down and discuss this text for many hours. In fact, the first three chapters of Genesis are the primary basis for our understanding of God and man. Our seminaries all have a course on the topic, “God and Man.” 30 hours of lecture/discussion time in the classroom, probably a number of different textbooks, at least one test, maybe two, and probably a paper of a minimum of 10 pages on just one of the many topics. Here we find the basic teachings on the relationship of God to man, of man to God, of man to man, and also man to the rest of creation. If we can summarize it that succinctly.

Who is God? He is all there was – all there is! Our text begins, “In the beginning, God.” Full stop! There was nothing else, only God. In the second verse there is mention of the Holy Spirit. In the third very God speaks, “Let the be light.”

If your Bible has the words of the 2nd person of the Trinity in red, then that phrase should be the first to be in red. Before God took on human flesh in the womb of Mary, that second person of the Trinity existed from eternity as the “Word of God.”

If we go to the 26th verse of this first chapter, we know that God is One, but that there are more than one persons. How? It is not as plainly evident in our English translation, but in the original Hebrew it is unmistakable. That verse reads: And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

That word “God” is singular, that is undeniably true. There is only one God!

But that one God says, “Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness.” Is God schizophrenic, suffering from a multiple personality disorder?

Or, is God declaring that He is one God in a multiplicity of persons? That is it exactly! What is more, in the first three verses of God’s word to us, it is the revelation of the Trinity – One God in three persons. This revelation of One God in three persons is also revealed God in other passages of His Scripture. For example, at Jesus baptism, the Father speaks and the Holy Spirit descends upon Him as a done. And even more Jesus Himself states that we are to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

At the beginning of Scripture, God is already revealing Himself to us so that we have one God, but this only God who created all that exists is One God is three persons.

How does that apply to us? That second person of the Trinity, the Word of God, declares that man is made in our image. He who becomes human flesh in the womb of Mary, says man is going to be made in His, that is, their image.

What is that image? That image is God's image. Initially that image is without sin, holy, perfect, just as God is. That image is also as the second person of the Trinity will be, fleshly. We need to read the second chapter of Genesis to see that the man is created from dust of the ground. It is then that this dusty flesh is granted life as God breathes into it his breath.

Interestingly, the Hebrew word for breath is also the Hebrew word for Spirit. God spirits life into dustly flesh. This is another thing that makes mankind in the image of God. God’s breath of life is ours.

Man is to have dominion over all other life. All other living beings came into existence by the very Word of God – He spoke them all into existence. There are some similarities between man and all other creatures, for example we all breathe air. However, the differences are far greater.

Man and woman were created in God's image, male and female, created in God's image.

There are also differences. As I stated, God’s breath breathed life into man. This grants an eternalness to mankind that those spoken into existence do not have. Man is endowed with intellect, the ability to reason, that is not in any other creature. While some animals can be taught to use some very simple, rudimentary, tools, none have the ability to create their own tools. No other creature than man has ever domesticated another creature.

Only man has been given the command by God to be steward over all of creation, to have dominion over it. All creation is God’s and we are given to be the caretakers of it. There are implications here about how we are to treat all of the creation entrusted to our care. This is a topic about which many books have been written.

As God “created them male and female” in His image, He has also commanded them “to be fruitful and multiply”. Dear friends, these two phrases have incredible implications concerning a number of issues polarizing our world today. These are not be social or political issues that which are integral to our creation and our Creator’s plan and purpose. To elaborate on these issues would extend this sermon into another couple hours. Suffice it to say that God gives directions to human life (beginning and end) and human sexuality issues.

This has not been a normal sermon where I point out sinfulness and lead you to repentance for the forgiveness of sins. It has been more didactic – more educationally directed. But we are not quite done yet.

In this first chapter we learn that man was created in God’s image? The next chapter goes into greater detail about that. As the crown of God’s creation, there is time taken to make even more explicit the time spent on the creation of those who are in His image.

If we are paying attention, this “beginning” also gives hints about God’s taking on our human flesh to redeem us. How so? Man’s image of God is fleshly – it points forward to God enfleshed. That image is a foreshadowing of the very Word of God, the 2nd person of the Trinity, taking form in the man Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter, the creation of Eve, Adam’s bride, is given great detail too. Eve was created from Adam’s rib? Why? God could have made Eve at the same time He created Adam – in the same manner that He created Adam, but He did not. Instead, He does something much different. He causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep, takes a rib from his side, makes Eve, and presents her to him. Why?

Do you see it? Is all about Christ. Christ, True God and True Man, He of whom Adam was only the image, is caused to fall into the deep sleep of death upon the cross. As the soldier thrusts the spear into His side, out flow blood and water. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the means by which Christ’s bride, the church is created – and presented to Christ.

You already knew this though, for you are familiar with the great marriage text in Ephesians. Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27)

All this is revealed to us “in the beginning” with this simple reading from Genesis. Is it any wonder that at the end of what we call the first chapter that: God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.?

What happened then? Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all his work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation. (Gen. 2:1-3)

Jesus was removed from the cross, having created His bride the Church, He was laid in the grave. In the tomb He rested on the seventh day from all the work He had done. All the work He had done to create His bride, to present her to Himself.

He arose on the 8th day, the first day of the week to bring sustaining life to His bride. He rose from His rest to feed the church, to nourish it and keep it. We are a part of the new creation – the creation of Christ’s eternal kingdom.

We have only scratched the surface of what is in this text. But the richness of it is a blessing for you, for me, and for all those whom God has called to be His own children. If only He will open our eyes by His Spirit’s blessing to see it. Amen.