

## 2. GENESIS ... BACK TO THE BEGINNING: (ADAM & EVE)

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And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man (Genesis 2: 21-22).

In our first article, *Genesis ... Back To The Beginning: Boundaries & Blessings*, we saw how God marked out everything in its uniquely ordained and properly functioning place in our world.

The original formless, dark and empty conglomerate of **Genesis 1:2** has finally taken its distinct and purposeful existence. The all-wise Creator fine-tuned every part in His world by the refining process we have termed **differentiation**. And we counted at least eight specific levels of **differentiation** in our cosmos.

For instance, the light was 'teased out' from the dark; the land was separated from the waters; plantlife was made distinct from the minerals; sentient creatures were differentiated from the vegetable life, and of course, ultimately mankind was placed on a different level again from all the other animals on land, sky and in sea.

Everything is described as **good** because it functions where and how it is supposed to. Thus, the Bible teaches **differentiation** where borders and boundaries --- by which every necessary part is beautifully distinguishable from, and yet in harmony with --- all its various parts. Built into our cosmos we learn that **differentiation** is absolutely critical to an harmonious universe (remember **Farmer Geddon?**).

### MANKIND DIFFERENTIATED FROM ALL THAT PRECEDED HIM

The eighth differentiation in **Genesis 1** is man[kind] who is described as being **in the image of God**, for the LORD God **created them male and female (Gen. 1: 27)**. God's mandate to mankind was to **rule over the fish of the sea, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground (Gen. 1: 26)**. Picking up our illustration from the previous article, we might say God gave our representatives Adam & Eve, rulership over 'the farm and its various paddocks'.

We may briefly observe in passing here, that **both sexes bear the divine image equally. Both sexes were given the command to manage the earth and exercise dominion. This is the foundation for the equal and proper treatment of women and girls!**

Male and female were thus created to go forth into the world as God's servant-ambassadors. Collectively, we are to exercise God's delegated kingly and caring rule over the environment and the other lesser creatures.

## A LESSON FOR THE MAN ADAM ABOUT HIS DIFFERENTIATION

Now, we need to step back before moving on. **Genesis chapter two** gives further detail before specifically arriving at the ninth and final stage of God's creative process of differentiation within our cosmos. We learn that God has a lesson or two to teach to the man Adam before Eve arrives on the scene.

### FIRST LESSON:- MEANINGFUL WORK

**The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Gen. 2:15).**

One of the key ingredients to fulfillment in life is meaningful work. The fact that Adam soon rebelled and his divinely-given work was thereafter dogged by frustration, does not mean work itself is the problem. Indeed, the LORD later says He has given six days for work with one rest day for each week.

One of the quickest ways to strip a man or a woman of their dignity and self-esteem is to rip rewarding work away from them. Dole-money for no work is unbiblical, unless of course, there are extenuating reasons such as disability or old age, in which case it is right for society to care for the indisposed and the sick and the weak.

One of the revolutionary outcomes from the **Protestant Reformation** was the belief that everybody had a "calling" in life. Whether it was the King, the Pastor, the Merchant, the Farmer, the Mother, the butcher, the baker or the candlestick maker, work was considered a divine calling upon one's life.

Living, as we now do in a post-Christian society, work has for most people become a drudgery that keeps them from enjoying the weekends! How unfulfilling. How happy is that person who not only finds work that is suitable to their God-given talents and proclivities, but who also knows they serve not only "the boss" while s/he is watching, but that they also **please God from the heart (Eph. 6: 5-6).**

Another way to express this, is to say that from the beginning, our work was to be our worship and praise to God Himself! All of life is thus sacred. There is no such thing as a menial task when viewed in this way. God our Father wants us to enjoy working, whether on the farm or in the firm, so to speak.

But idleness in able bodies and minds is the Devil's workshop! The apostle Paul *commanded* the churches that, **if a man will not work, let him not eat (2 Thess. 3: 10).** Try telling that to the growing numbers who think the Government owes them a living for no work! Get to work or starve is the Bible mandate.

However, even with satisfying work in a perfect environment and, even after being free to eat to his content from the garden's abundant produce, Adam still has a gnawing emptiness in his soul. Something is still missing --- or rather, someone is missing!

## SECOND LESSON:- THE PARADE

Before taking a rib from Adam's side to form the one whom God Himself describes variously as the **female, the woman** and **the wife** --- a suitable helper specially designed and fitted for the man --- God undertook a powerful object lesson designed to drive home to him two critical truths: his own unrivalled place within the world, and his need for a suitable partner to help manage "the farm";

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. **But for Adam no suitable helper was found ... (Gen. 2: 18-20).**

Notice that God appoints Adam as *the first scientist* in the world! When God paraded the animals in front of Adam for his observation and naming, the first thing Adam learned was the objective reality of his world and that he was to study it. Science is not the enemy of God! ( <sup>1</sup> )

The world with its various differentiations *is*. The created order *exists*. The animals in all their kaleidoscopic kinds stood in front of Adam. God expected Adam to observe and take note of the various characteristics of the animals. God was impressing upon Adam that he is a part of, but different from, the other plants and animals 'out there'. ( <sup>2</sup> ) ( <sup>3</sup> )

The reason why Adam is able to engage in God's object lesson when the animals are paraded in front of him is because he is a rational creature. Made in God's image, Adam can receive propositional truth from his Creator and he has observational powers. Adam has the capacity to receive revelatory knowledge in order to understand his different place in God's created order.

I cannot go past Francis Schaeffer's powerful observation at this point;

What is it that differentiates Adam and Eve from the rest of creation? We find the answer in Genesis 1: 26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image ..." What differentiates Adam and Eve from the rest of creation is that they were created in the *image of God* ... This phrase, *the image of God*, is as important as anything in Scripture, because men today can no longer answer that crucial question, "Who am I?"

In his own naturalistic theories, with the uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system, with an evolutionary concept of a mechanical, chance parade from the atom to

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<sup>1</sup> In Hebrew understanding to name something or someone is to determine its characteristic and place in the world.

<sup>2</sup> By this we see how the various Eastern philosophies' which believe this world is an illusion and not objectively real (Buddhism for example) fail the Genesis worldview of created objectivity.

<sup>3</sup> This also explains why a true Bible perspective and true observational science go hand-in-glove. There is no conflict between the two disciplines. One can be both a committed Bible-believer and a legitimate scientist!

man, man has lost his unique identity. As he looks out upon the world, as he faces the machine, he cannot tell himself from what he faces. He cannot distinguish himself from other things. ( <sup>4</sup> )

The Bible-believer does not suffer from this modern identity crisis! We know who we are. We know why we are here and where we belong in the world. We appreciate our God-given difference. We know that we are created to relate to God and the world in a way that the rest of creation cannot.

There is a vertical dimension upwards (we can hear God, know His thoughts, understand His word). There is a horizontal dimension (we can communicate with other human beings), and then there is an inclined (downwards) dimension of responsible rulership over the environment and other creatures. ( <sup>5</sup> )

Adam stands in the world and before the animals as an unprogrammed part of the cosmos, a real man in a real history; a wonder because he truly reflects His Maker. Understanding our created differentiation gives us the intellectual, emotional, psychological and spiritual basis to know who we are.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?

As we suggested in the previous article, going back to the very beginning will help us answer most, if not all, of the bioethical questions of our day. Take the question of capital punishment for example --- and I warn you this is controversial, but I am not writing to win a popularity contest.

I believe the current rejection of capital punishment by “all civilised jurisdictions” represents a failure to understand that every single human being is made **in the image of God**. Now doesn't that sound counterintuitive? How can the State executing a known, proven beyond-doubt convicted murderer in any way, shape or form, be said to promote **the image of God**? ( <sup>6</sup> )

After Adam & Eve's rebellion in the Garden --- what theologians call '**The Fall**' --- the Bible teaches that mankind still retained a good measure of **the image of God**. Yes, true, **the Fall** has cut off mankind from enjoying vital fellowship with God, but it has not destroyed our original differentiation within the world.

God instructed **Noah** after the **Great Flood** (but long before the Mosaic regulations), **“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God He made man”** ( **Genesis 9:6**). Observe carefully, that after Adam & Eve had

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<sup>4</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*, IVP, Ill., 1972, p46 (Italics original).

<sup>5</sup> I treat the Genesis creation story of Adam & Eve as true historic individuals. New Testament doctrines of the entrance of sin into the cosmos, death, the curse upon the physical creation now, the doctrine of our salvation in Christ, and even the roles of men and women in marriage, family, and the church are all grounded in the Genesis account of Adam's historicity.

<sup>6</sup> I am assuming this manslayer has had the benefit of being heard before an impartial jury, the full and unbiased presentation of scientific data and testimony, and has been presumed innocent until proven guilty with all due process of Lady Justice who is blind to prejudice!

rebelled against heaven, and after they had been expelled from the Garden, that God Himself considers people to still retain their special created status **in the image of God**.

All the way down to the book of **James** we still learn that, when we **curse men who have been made in the likeness of God**, we dishonour their Creator and ours' (**James 3: 9**)!

Therefore, every time I look into the face of another man or woman I am to see a person created **in the image of God** --- as much as I am. As a Christian, I have a strong moral basis for properly respecting my fellow man and certainly not shedding his blood. ( <sup>7</sup> )

Since the Bible teaches we are differentiated from all other creatures we should not be confused as to the relative value between a man or a whale! Wantonly killing a whale is a crime, horrendous indeed. But wantonly shedding another man's blood is a high crime against the God of heaven because of that man's origin and value in God.

Therefore, to deliberately take another person's life wantonly deserves a particular and summary judgment ... the guilty perpetrator must forfeit their own life in God's world.

Our "civilised" society which rejects capital punishment for so-called humanitarian reasons, or on so-called compassionate grounds, fails to understand that to destroy a man or a woman, a boy or a girl --- and I must also say a human foetus --- who are all made in His image is, in effect, to personally attack the Creator. ( <sup>8</sup> )

Forgive me if I quote **Francis Schaeffer** again to close out this little section,

Thus the flow of history has tremendous implications for every aspect of our lives. I stand in the flow of history. I know *my* origin. My lineage is longer than the Queen of England's. It does not start at the Battle of Hastings. It does not start with the beginnings of good families, wherever and whenever they lived. As I look at myself in the flow of space-time reality, I see my origin in Adam and in God's creating man in his own image. ( <sup>9</sup> )

(You might like to add your own impressive genealogy if you are not of European descent. You might be able to claim ancestry from the amazing Aboriginal culture, or any other native persons from around the globe, or from the long record of Chinese ancestry, etc. but the point is still the same --- we are all from Adam in God's image.)

Created by God and all descended from Adam & Eve who were **in the image of God**, you and I are differentiated from all other creatures. Given over-lordship and holy work to do, we are incredibly special in this world!

(To be continued ...)

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<sup>7</sup> This Noahide instruction cannot be dismissed as "just Old Testament" theology which is now abrogated by the New Covenant, for it predates the establishment of the nations and their governments, and it also comes before the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Legislation. It is therefore a universal mandate for the orderly and civilised running of society.

<sup>8</sup> Think about revolutionaries who burn the President's, or the King's effigy. If they could get their hands on the actual person whose image they are defacing and destroying, they would!

<sup>9</sup> *Op. Cit.* pp51

