



Genesis: In the Beginning - Study 2

Background

Over the next few studies in this series we want to continue exploring something of our salvation history, to touch the tip of the iceberg, and hopefully encourage you in your faith and walk with the Lord.

The Message

God's eight creative acts detailed in Genesis 1 are distributed into a sequence of forming and filling, as detailed in the following table:

| DAY | FORMING | DAY | FILLING |
|-----|---------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| 1 | Light | 4 | Sun, Moon & Stars |
| 2 | Water and sky | 5 | Fish and birds |
| 3 | Land and vegetation | 6 | Beasts and human beings |

It is important to remember that creation is good - 'the perfect reflection of His thought' (Genesis 1:4,12,18,21,25, and 31). Note how everything that God created is good, but when everything is taken together it is very good. There is a sense of completeness; creation was **not** by chance, but part of God's plan and purpose, and no part of it must be considered alone. In our previous study in this series we looked at the image of the Holy Spirit '*moving gently on the face of the waters*', and how there was such a sense of nurturing and protection as a mother hen for her chicks (Genesis 1:1-2). We shall see how God's intention was for humankind to be stewards of creation, being agents of His wholeness.

It is in Genesis that we first learn of what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman:

- The 'image of God' is both male and female (Genesis 1:27).
- A 'living being' is a mixture of both heaven and earth (Genesis 2:7).
- We are different from animals (Genesis 2:20).
- We can communicate with God (Genesis 3:8-13).
- We are responsible before God (Genesis 2:16-17).
- We are creative like God (Genesis 4:21-22).
- We have dominion upon the earth (Genesis 1:28).

We are made from the earth (Genesis 2:7). We are inextricably a part of nature. We are formed



from soil into which God has breathed His breath of life. 'Adam' literally means 'human', which is derived from 'Adamah' meaning 'earth'. But, we are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), and we are the culmination of God's creation - He saved the best for last. This makes us unique and different from any other creature.

Let's look at Genesis 1:26, 28 and 2:15 in more detail. There are four key verbs contained in God's mandate to humankind. These can be summarised as follows:

- **dominion:** 'radah' - to rule over, to trample ('like a winepress').
- **subdue:** 'kabash' - to subdue, to stamp.
- **work:** 'abad' - to serve like a slave.
- **take care:** 'shamar' - to watch over and preserve.

At first glance, these words seem to stand in opposition to each other. But unless we understand the context we will fail to have a clear goal at which to set our sights. To have dominion and to subdue suggest that we are to rule only as God rules. The fundamental biblical understanding of the nature of kingship is 'servanthood' (Matthew 20:28, Philippians 2:6-7) and 'shepherding' (2 Samuel 5:2, Ezekiel 34:1-31, John 10:11). We learn of course about true kingship in the person of Jesus. In reality we are to join with God in standing against exploitation of creation and provide protection for its inhabitants. We must remember that creation belongs to God (Psalm 24:1, 89:11, 1 Chronicles 29:11). To work and to care suggests with character typified by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). There is thus a subtle interplay between stewardship and companionship.

Creation is marred by the fall, we only need to open our eyes to see that. Because of Adam and Eve disobeying God by eating the apple off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil their relationship with God suffered terrible consequences, which are also reflected in nature. How often does God say to us, as He said to Adam and Eve, "*Where are you?*". In Romans 8:22 we read "*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time*".

It is part of God's purpose and plan for the effects of the fall to be undone. John's vision described in Revelation 21:1 - 5 says that eventually there will be a '*new heaven and a new earth*'. For this to happen restoration has to take place; God's restoration began with Jesus. For Christians this means we will eventually see the "new heaven and the new earth" through our restored relationship with God in Jesus. We must remember that "*No-one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again*" (John 3:3). Jesus was crucified on the cross so that we might have the assurance; "*For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16).

We shall return to Genesis again in further studies, because so much of what we study in the rest



of Scripture is undergirded by the truths we read about in this book. Genesis is not some fairy story or myth, but a deep insight into God's character, full of truth.

Questions:

1. Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?
2. What does the Bible mean when it says that; "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time"?
3. What does John 3:3 mean? "No-one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again".
4. Read Revelation 21. Think about the character of God who understands what it is like to live in this world and is not only able to identify with our sufferings but has promised us an everlasting hope with Jesus.

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subject to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:18-21)



It is interesting to note that no prohibition is made against eating of the Tree of Life before the fall. Only after the fall is access forbidden (Genesis 3:22), and then apparently in the interests of Adam and Eve themselves, lest they live forever in a fallen state. This prohibition assumes human freedom to choose and thus an inherent moral capacity.

Questions

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