

1. Foundations

Biblical material: Matt. 19:3-8, Luke 17:26-30, Acts 7:1-15, Rom. 1:17, 4:3, 5:14, Heb. 11:1-22.

Quotes:

- If the Bible is mistaken in telling us where we came from, how can we trust it to tell us where we're going? *Justin Brown*
- We are all born as molecules in the heart of a billion stars; molecules that do not understand politics or policies or differences. Over a billion years, we foolish molecules forget who we are, and where we came from. *J. Michael Straczynski, Babylon 5*
- Humans represent just one tiny, largely fortuitous, and late-arising twig on the enormously arborescent bush of life. *Stephen Jay Gould*
- Christianity has fought, still fights, and will continue to fight science to the desperate end over evolution, because evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus' earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the Son of God. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing. *G. Richard Bozarth, 'The Meaning of Evolution', American Atheist magazine*

Questions

Why is important to have this “foundation” in a concept of origins? What does it matter where we came from? How do we find meaning and purpose in the universe? Is it just a matter of how we feel? How do views of our origins change the way we see things—especially spiritual ones? What New Testament examples help us here?

Discussion

The Biblical account of origins is not “just an option.” Beliefs about where we come from affect us very deeply. Even now, in conversation, one of the first questions is “Where are you from?” We believe we can know a great deal simply from identifying a person's place of birth and upbringing.

Similarly for us as human beings. *It makes a huge difference whether we believe we are made in the image of God or are just the descendants of primeval slime.* So as we study the concepts in Genesis we need to remind ourselves that this is our heritage—that we are God's children, created by him, and not made for this defective and deficient existence but for a world without sin, where righteousness dwells.

The New Testament texts cited for this study are primarily to indicate the continuing acceptance of the creation account in the gospels and early church writings. That Jesus clearly accepted the veracity of Genesis is an important point to note. And why should this be doubted, if Jesus is God, and “without him was not anything made that was made”? Jesus as Creator is not a perspective we often hear, but that is the intent behind John's words in the prologue to his gospel. The parallels between John 1 and Genesis 1 have often been noted—they are deliberate and full of meaning. Yet the most significant point is that Genesis 1 begins with God, unqualified and undebated. John 1 begins with the Word, similarly affirmed. The question is in both cases, who is God? Who is this creator God, who is this Jesus the Word who comes to reveal him?

The foundation of faith is the God you believe in. Many of the arguments over Genesis have this as their hidden agenda—for if God is as described, and is as involved with us as he states, then a response from us is essential. No wonder that many either dismiss the God of Genesis because they want no Creator in their lives, or modify this God into the “First Cause” or the “Blind Watchmaker” or some other idea that is far from a Father that seeks a relationship with every one of us.

“Even back in Genesis, we are given glimpses of the closeness with which God interacts with His fallen beings. Kind of a nice thought, isn’t it, especially if you view God as loving and compassionate.” (Tuesday’s lesson). Surely this is more than a “kind of nice thought”! If the creation of our world was part of God’s answers to the issues in the great controversy, then the belief in God as loving and compassionate is surely *the* major issue to be decided!

As the lesson points out, even in Old Testament times, the issue was not law, but faith—in other words, trusting in a trustworthy God. *Only as we look at Genesis and understand how this book reflects the truth about the nature and character of God can it be helpful to our lives today.*

Comment

The week. The year is the time it takes the earth to orbit the sun. The month is the orbit of the moon round the earth. The day is a single rotation of the earth. But the week, where did that come from? There’s nothing in the sky above or the earth beneath to explain this seven-day period. Except the explanation from the Bible: “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made...and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.” The week comes from Creation.

The Sudden Appearance of Fossils. Fossils of complex living organisms suddenly appear in the Cambrian rocks. Some of these are supposed to have taken three billion years to evolve, but no ancestor of these life-forms has ever been found anywhere on earth! They appear suddenly as if just created...

Ellen White Comment

The Eden home of our first parents was prepared for them by God himself. When he had furnished it with everything that man could desire, he said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.”

We have here revealed to us the truth concerning the origin of man. These words prove how false is the invention of Satan, which has been reiterated by man, that the human race has been developed, stage by stage, from the lowest order of animals. This is one of the deceptions by which Satan seeks to lower in the eyes of man God’s great work of creation.

God said, “Let us make man in our image.” He gave to the work of his hands not only a form resembling his own, but a mind capable of comprehending divine things. His understanding, his memory, his imagination,—every faculty of man’s mind,—reflected the image of God. In disposition and heart he was qualified to receive heavenly instruction. He possessed a right understanding, a true knowledge of his Creator, of himself, his duty, his obligations in respect to the law of God. His judgment was uncorrupted, unbiased, and disposed to obedience and affection, regulated according to reason and truth. He was capable of enjoying to the utmost capacity the good gifts of God. Everything upon which he looked was transporting to his senses; every sound was as music in his ears. Yet he was not placed beyond the reach of temptation. He stood as the representative of the human race,—a free moral agent. {YI, August 10, 1899}

© Jonathan Gallagher 2006