

DAILY DOSE OF DOCTRINE

November 12 - 16, 2007



November 12, 2007 **Creation**

“You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.”¹

Our God is a creative God. He brings into existence ‘ex nihilo’ – from nothing - things that did not previously exist and he fashions things out of pre-existing materials. He has made the universe and all things in it for his own glory² and because it brings him joy³.

Created in his image, we human beings are also ‘creators’. God placed the first humans in a garden to work it and take care of it.⁴ This was not a matter of arduous labour, but of shaping and being ‘fruitful’. God’s intention was that the human race would increase and multiply over the face of the earth. To that end, he ‘stocked’ it with endless resources so that, in harmony with the rest of nature, we might build, compose, design, and beautify in every sphere of endeavour. And, after aeons of creating here on Earth, might we then have gone on partner with God in exploring, creating and ‘enjoying’ his worlds beyond our own?

Whenever we imagine, fashion or grow that which is ‘good’, we resonate with the Spirit of our Creator. We are fulfilling part of our purpose for being here and the joy and satisfaction we feel is grounded in the eternal reality of the Divine.

¹ Nehemiah 9:6 (TNIV)

² Isaiah 43:7; 60:21

³ Psalm 104:31

⁴ Genesis 2:15

November 13, 2007 To Have ‘Dominion’

*“The highest heavens belong to the LORD,
but the earth he has given to humankind.”¹*

Another way in which humans are made in the ‘image of God’ is that we were designed to ‘rule’ over creation. God is Lord and King of all the universe. However, in creating human beings, he assigned us the role of being his ‘governors’ on planet earth. As the governor of a colony rules in the name and place of the monarch, we were called to rule as God’s agents on Earth. The naming of the animals by Adam and Eve’s tutoring of the serpent both reinforce that the humans were the rulers of the created order in this corner of the universe.²

This does not mean that human beings were to rule any way they pleased. When a governor rules in the name of the monarch, the task is to promote the latter’s agenda, not one’s own. Our calling was to rule the world in righteousness and love.

Responsibility must be accompanied by authority. God, in effect, gave authority over planet Earth to the humans. When we ‘fell’, rebelling against the Lordship of God, we effectively signed over the title deed of Earth to a new master. This is why the devil is called the ‘prince of this world’³. And many believe the ‘scroll’ of Revelation 5 to be that ‘title-deed’, which Jesus purchased back with his own blood at the crucifixion. What the first ‘Man’ foolishly ‘surrendered’, the Son of Man rescued from the dominion of the evil one.

¹ Psalm 115:16 (TNIV) See also Gen. 1:26, 28; Psalm 8:5-8

² Genesis 2:19-20 and 3:1-3

³ John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11

November 14, 2007 'Stewards of Creation'

“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”¹

Unfortunately, the Biblical affirmation that humans are ‘rulers’ of Creation has sometimes been used to justify exploitation of the natural world. If we are commanded to ‘subdue’ the world, can we not do as we please? Clear cut the forests? Strip mine the mountains? Use up species to extinction and pollute rivers and oceans as we wish?

Even as the devil can quote Scripture for his own purposes, sinful humans can use twisted doctrine to justify their own selfishness.

‘Subdue’ in this context reflects what God himself has been doing in creating the world. In the beginning there was chaos and darkness. God actively worked to bring order and beauty. We are called to follow his example and purposes.

If we are ‘faithful’ stewards of Creation, our outlook will be one of loving care for the natural world. Our lifestyles will be marked by careful use of non-renewable resources, zeal for the protection of species and a dedication to avoid any sort of damage to the environment.

In part, being a ‘new creation’ in Christ means that we return to our role as responsible stewards of the Earth.

¹ Genesis 1:28 (TNIV)

November 15, 2007 Interlude: Humans & Animals

“You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,”¹

In the past, theologians have argued that an essential difference between humans and other animals is that the latter do not possess ‘souls’. This is based on an ‘argument from silence’: we are told that “God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”², but no such statement is made regarding the animals.

Arguments from ‘silence’ are of dubious weight and this one needs to contend with Genesis 3:1. Eve seems to find it an everyday occurrence to hold discourse with a talking, reasoning snake!

It should be remembered that the Bible is not a compendium of all knowledge on all subjects. Its primary focus is our relationship with God. The details of animal creation and whether animals have souls³ is not really addressed.

It is sometimes said that we are wise to speak when the Bible speaks and remain silent when the Bible is silent. While we ‘see through a glass darkly’ on this particular subject, we may be confident that things will be made plain when this present age is ended and God fully recreates a new heaven and earth.⁴

¹ Psalm 8:6-7 (TNIV)

² Genesis 2:7 (KJV)

³ C.S. Lewis speculated that domesticated animals which have much contact with humans may take on something of the ‘soulfulness’ of their owners and so be raised to heaven – but this too is speculation.

⁴ 1 Cor. 13:12 (KJV)

November 16, 2007 To Have Fellowship

“...the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day...”¹

God did not create humans because he needed governors or property managers for planet Earth. Those roles are secondary to His desire to have us around so that we might live in a relationship of fellowship and love with our Creator.

The early chapters of Genesis give us a glimpse of how that relationship was meant to be. At the end of the day, it would appear that God would join our first parents in the Garden. They would see him ‘face to face’. They would have had the opportunity to show him the things they had been doing, tell him of their discoveries, ask questions, learn and grow. Over years and millennia their/our relationship with him would have blossomed and grown.

This is again our opportunity as part of God’s ‘new creation’. Christ’s sacrifice has opened up the door to fellowship with God again. Though, for now, we walk by faith rather than by sight, God still calls us to see that we are not only ‘servants’, but ‘friends’² and ‘family’³ with God. He delights in the time we spend with him.

And, Genesis is a foretaste of the life to come when face to face fellowship will be restored forever.

“And He walks with me and He talks with me
And He tells me I am his own
And the joy we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known.”⁴

¹ Genesis 3:8 (TNIV)

² John 15:13-15; Luke 5:34, 12:4

³ John 1:12; Gal. 3:26;

⁴ From “In the Garden” by Charles Austen Miles, 1913

