

No.1. The Origin of Man

In our Bible Class studies last year the main study for the year was *The Miracle in Scripture*, a study that included a section that dealt with the issue of *Special Revelation*. That divine special revelation that is comprised in the Scriptures is a revelation in which man is vitally concerned. Divine revelation is the revelation of God in His dealings with the human race and is especially a revelation of the redemption that God has prepared for men. Therefore, man occupies a central place in Scripture, meaning that the *Doctrine of Man* is of vital importance in the study of God's word.

When dealing with a study of man one of the terms that is used is *Anthropology*, which signifies "the doctrine of man" or "the study of man". *Anthropology* is a term that is employed in a general way relating to the study of man from various perspectives, being employed by many in the secular world as they promote their erroneous views on the study of man. But in what may be called *Theological Anthropology* we are concerned only with what Scripture teaches with regard to man and the position in which he stands in relation to God. Consequently, *Theological Anthropology* takes as its only source and authority the Scriptures of truth. Over the coming weeks I wish to look with you at this particular subject – *The Doctrine of Man*.

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

Obviously this is the starting point in this study – the origin of man. The origin of man is plainly revealed in Scripture; and the fundamental point that the Scripture establishes is that man is a creature of God. Man's existence is the result if a direct act of God.

There is not even the slightest hint in Scripture that man or anything else for that matter is the product of evolution – either *naturalistic* or *theistic* evolution. Evolution it must always be remembered is purely a theory, a hypothesis, though it is often presented as scientific fact. To present it as scientific fact is a falsehood in itself simply because evolution has never been observed, thus it does not belong to the realm of true science. *Science* is knowledge that is based on observed facts and tested truths arranged in an orderly system. Evolution, therefore, does not belong to the realm of science for it does not meet these criteria – it is only a theory.

Thus, since all things had to have a beginning and since evolution fails to prove its theory concerning the origin of man, it fails to disprove Scripture which reveals and declares that man is the creature of God. As those who accept the Scripture as God's infallible word, we bow to its revelation & teaching that God created man. Note the following quotation from the W.C.F. ch.4, section 2 – "After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image."

Moreover, not only does Scripture reveal that man was created by the direct act of God in creation, it also reveals that as a creature of God man occupies a position of the highest significance and importance in God's creation. The following details that are based on the Genesis account of man's creation make this point very clear.

1. The Sequence of the Creation of Man

As Genesis 1 reveals there was an order or sequence in the steps of creation. Day by day God created in an orderly fashion culminating in the creation of man. As v.v.24-31 reveal man was created on the 6th day along with other creatures. However, man's creation took place as the last major event of that 6th day of the creation week. Man's creation was the climax of God's creative activity.

(a) The creation of everything else was preparatory to man's creation. Everything preceding the creation of man served to prepare a fit dwelling place for man who was essentially the king of God's creation. Man at his creation was introduced into a perfect environment that God had prepared for him.

(b) The terminology introducing the sequence in creation changes dramatically at the point of the creation of man. For example a number of times one reads the term "Let there be..." – v.v.3, 6, 14. But note v.26 – now it is said "Let us make man." Note the plural *us* – the Church has generally regarded this as a reference to the trinity of divine persons. As it were, they pause in the great creative scheme of things, take counsel together and together determine to create man.

2. The Solemnity of the Creation of Man

The creation of man is surrounded by great solemnity as is seen in various ways.

(a) Man's creation was in the strictest sense of terms the immediate act of God. In other instances in the creative order God made use of what He had already created. See v.v.11, 20, 24. But compare with this the bare statement "And God created man..." showing an immediate act of God.

(b) Man's creation is distinguished from that of the lower creatures in that he alone was made in the image of God. Concerning fish, birds and beasts it is stated that each was made after its kind; but of man alone it is said that he was made in God's image. We will look at this in more detail later, but for now it clearly signifies that spiritually, intellectually and morally man was created in the likeness of God.

(c) At his creation man was placed in an exalted position. See Gen 1: 26-28 & ch.2: 19, 20. Man was placed over God's creation as a vice-regent with dominion over all the lower creatures, see Psalm 8: 3-8. Obviously he was to rule over all things in order that he and the other creatures might magnify & glorify the Creator and the Lord of the universe. Cf. Rev 4: 10, 11.

3. The Significance of the Creation of Man

See Gen 2: 4-7. These verses give a more detailed account of the creation of man. V.7 shows a clear distinction between the body and the soul, thereby asserting the twofold nature of man. He is body and soul. The significance of his creation in this manner is that he is thereby distinguished from all other creatures. It is into man's body alone that God breathed the *breath of life*. Thereby man became "a living soul" which signifies in the Genesis context that man was a living being totally distinct from all other earthly creatures.