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A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 4.1 – The Doctrine of Human Beings and Sin

The Creation of Human Beings

God created two human beings on the sixth day of world history: a man and a woman (Adam and Eve). This is stated first of all in Genesis 1:27-29: **“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’ And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.”**

It is common in our world today to refer to human beings as animals. In fact, evolutionists believe that human beings have gradually evolved over millions of years from animals and are in the process of evolving into kinds of creatures that will be superior to our present state. But God clearly tells us in His Word that human beings are a separate creation, created directly by God. They did not evolve from any other created thing. Human beings alone were created in the image of God. Human beings alone were put in charge of the rest of creation. The similarities between human beings and other creatures are substantial but superficial.

Genesis 2:7-25 supplies additional information on God’s creation of human beings. We are told that **“the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”** This first human being was the male Adam. After describing the splendid home God had prepared for Adam in the Garden of Eden, and presenting the one command God gave to Adam, the account tells us how God created a desire in Adam for a human partner. God brought all the animals to Adam so that he could give them their names. **“But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.”**

The account continues: **“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’”**

There are some similarities between human beings and animals. This is not surprising since the same Creator created both of them. For example, the diet of both humans and animals was the same at first. God gave all plant life to both humans and animals for food. Both humans and animals came from the earth, and after sin and death came into the world through human sin, both humans and animals die and return to dust. Solomon later pointed out these similarities: **“What happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other, Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all return to dust”** (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20).

But the differences are greater than the similarities. God commanded the earth to bring forth the animal world. Humans were created directly by God. The bodies of both man and animal return to dust in death. But there is a difference between man and animal with respect to their souls (or spirits). With regard to humans Solomon says: **“The spirit will return to God who gave it”** (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

This agrees with his own previous question: **“Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?”** (Ecclesiastes 3:21). But the greatest difference is the fact that God created the first man and woman in the image of God. This means that there is also a difference in intelligence, in personality, in responsibility. God gives instructions in words to human beings so that they may honor Him and pray to Him. Animals do not read directions and they do not pray. David wrote: **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go, I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding”** (Psalm 32:8-9). God gave His command concerning the trees in Eden only to Adam and Eve, not to the animals.

Notice that every human being has both a body and a soul. God first formed man’s body from dust, but there was no life in that body until God **“breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being”** (Genesis 2:7). Jesus clearly delineated these two parts of the human being when He told His disciples: **“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matthew 10:28). When the body is put to death, the soul lives on, either with the Lord in heaven, or with the spirits in hell.

Temporal death, that is, the death of the body, is a separation of the body from the soul (or spirit). Rachel’s death in giving birth to a son is described in this way: **“And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni, but his father called him Benjamin”** (Genesis 35:18). Before Elijah brought a dead boy back to life by the power of the Lord, he prayed: **“O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him. Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived”** (1 Kings 17: 21-22). The Bible describes Jesus’ death in the same way: He **“yielded up His spirit”** (Matthew 27:50); **“He gave up His spirit”** (John 19:30). Even though there is some difference in the way the words are used, soul and spirit basically refer to the same part of a person.

All human beings who have ever lived and who are living today are the descendants of Adam and Eve. In fact, since all the original earth inhabitants were destroyed in the great flood of Noah’s time, all human beings who are living today are descendants of Noah and his wife and one of their three sons, Shem, Ham, or Japheth. The apostle Paul told his audience in Athens: **“And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord”** (Acts 17:26-27). Paul wrote in his letter to the Christians in Rome: **“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned”** (Romans 5:12).

The Bible does not set one race or tribe of men above other races or tribes. All humans are creatures of God, originally made in the image of God and descendants of Adam and Eve. In fact, when God created Adam and Eve, He created all human beings in them. We also can say with Job: **“Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity”** (Job 10:8). We can also praise God with David, saying: **“You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lower parts of the earth”** (Psalm 139:13-15).

Questions

1. When did God create human beings?
2. What are some of the reasons for rejecting the view that humans are animals?
3. How did God create in Adam a desire for a human partner?
4. In what ways are humans similar to animals?
5. In what ways are humans different from animals?
6. What are the two parts of the human being?
7. What happens when a person dies?
8. In what way are all human races and tribes related to each other?
9. Why is there no reason to put one race above another race?
10. Why can you say that God is your Creator?