

Genesis

Creation, Covenants, All Grace – study 1



The COVENANT of CREATION (2:4-17)

2:4-7 How does the intimacy of God's relation with Adam find expression?

... breathed is warmly personal, with the face-to-face intimacy of a kiss and the significance that this was an act of giving as well as making; and self-giving at that. Cf. Job 32:8; also John 20:22, where Jesus bestows the Holy Spirit as the animating breath of the new creation, the church. Even at our making, then, the pattern "God so loved ... that he gave ..." is already visible. -- **Derek Kidner, Genesis** p. 60

This suggests not merely breathing through the nostrils, but the envelopment of the whole animal organism with a new quality of Divine life, which created a new being; a combination, strange and mysterious, of dust and Deity ... Thus man essentially is spirit. -- **G. Campbell Morgan, The Book of Genesis** p. 19

Paul makes an antithesis between this living soul and the quickening spirit which Christ confers upon the faithful, (1 Cor. xv. 45,) for no other purpose than to teach us the state of man was not perfected in the person of Adam; but it is a



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– the peculiar paradox of man's dual nature, "of dust and Deity ..."

peculiar benefit conferred by Christ, that we may be renewed to a life which is *celestial*, whereas before the fall of Adam, man's life was only *earthly* seeing it had no firm and settled constancy. -- **John Calvin, The Book of Genesis** p. 112

2:8-14 Expand on the place of grace in the creation account (Ps. 104:10-35; contrast the Psalmist's response with Adam and Eve's.)

... there is much to commend the literal sense, naive though it may seem. It does not make the trees magical (for the Old Testament has no room for blind forces, only for the acts of God), but rather sacramental, in the broad sense of the word, in that they are physical means of a spiritual transaction. -- **D. Kidner, op.cit.**, p.62

The OT word is *berit*; the NT *diatheke*. Basically, it denotes a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other's behalf. Theologically (used of relations between God and man) it denotes a gracious undertaking entered into by God for the benefit and blessing of man, and specifically of those men who by faith receive the promises and commit themselves to the obligations which this undertaking involves. -- **G.L. Archer, Jr., Baker's Dictionary of Theology** p. 142

2:15-17 Though of grace, the creation covenant was not unilateral. Why does unbelief mock its single prohibition? (Luke 16:10-12; James 2:10)

... knowledge of good and evil corresponds to the ability to decide. It is the prerogative of the king who judges his subjects and of the father who brings up his son. What analysis could be more suitable for Genesis? It shows the man as the vassal of the LORD by virtue of his covenant of grace. It makes him as it were a son of the Creator God. The LORD reserves for himself the royal prerogative to decide, the Creator God alone knows good and evil, he alone is autonomous. -- **Henri Blocher, In the Beginning** p. 132

We must also see what is the cause of death, namely alienation from God. Thence it follows, that under the name of death is comprehended all these miseries in which Adam involved himself by his defection; for as soon as he revolted from God, the fountain of life, he was cast down from his former state, in order that he might perceive the life of man without God to be wretched and lost, and therefore differing nothing from death. Hence the condition of man after his sin is not improperly called both the privation of life, and death. The miseries and evils both of soul and body, with which man is beset so long as he is on earth, are a kind of entrance into death, till death itself entirely absorbs him; for the Scripture everywhere calls those dead, who, being oppressed by the tyranny of sin and Satan, breathe nothing but their own destruction. Wherefore the question is superfluous, how it was that God threatened death to Adam on the day in which he should touch the fruit, when he long deferred the punishment? For then was Adam consigned to death and death began its reign in him, until supervening grace should bring a remedy. -- **John Calvin, op.cit.**, p. 127

As R. Martin-Achard has put it: "Before the Fall, between Adam and death, which is part of his natural lot as an element in his human heritage, there stands the Living God; His presence is sufficient to ward death off ...". The translation of Enoch, "that he should not see death" (Heb. 11:5), perhaps illustrates what God had prepared for man. -- **Derek Kidner, op.cit.**, p. 65

How simple and sober is our narrative, compared to the sensual myths of the nations, in letting the meaning of life in Paradise consist completely in the question of obedience to God and not in pleasure and freedom from suffering, etc. -- **G. Von Rad, Genesis** p. 79

The death of the body is the separation of soul and spirit from the body. The death of soul and spirit is their separation from God. -- **D.G. Barnhouse, Genesis** p. 16

MARRIAGE: The FOUNDATION of SOCIETY (2:18-25)

2:18-20 How does marriage reflect God's grace in creation, and the man/woman relationship mirror God/man?

In the second "tablet" of Genesis, God is no longer called simply "God", as in the first, but YHWH God. Why? The "tetragrammaton" YHWH which derives from the verb "to be" and was doubtless pronounced "Yahweh" -- replaced by "the LORD" when read in the synagogue, in order to avoid the slightest risk of profanity -- plays the role of God's personal name. This is the name God bears when he comes and visits his people and makes a covenant with them; this is his covenant name, his name for his "marriage" with Israel. -- **Blocher, op.cit.**, p. 111

2:21-23 What do vv. 7 and 22 tell us of woman's status in relation to both God and her husband?

... Aristotle considered woman to be a different nature, inferior to man. -- **Henri Blocher, op.cit.**, p. 93

What does man's NAMING woman indicate? (cf. vv. 19,20)

If the apostle Paul adds: "man is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man" (1 Cor. 11:7), it is the fruit of his reflection on the order. He does not deprive the woman, as a human being, of the glory of being as the image of God, but he observes that *in the relationship of the sexes* the privilege of authority, which represents God, rests on the side of the male. If we may be permitted the comment, there is a kind of subtle balance. In all earthly relationships, the man represents God more obviously than does the woman: in active transcendence, in keeping an objective distance, in leadership and in work. But we realize at once that it is the woman who best represents humanity in its relationship *with God*: in the face-to-face relationship with the LORD, every human being, male or female, must accept a feminine position, existing from him and for him, receiving and bearing the seed of his word, receiving and bearing the name he gives. And the "three things" that remain, faith, hope and love (1

Cor. 13:13), have they not all a feminine fragrance? Well did the Creator weigh the respective advantages of the male and the female. The scales are less unequal than is supposed. Each one of us, man and woman, finds it easier to live one dimension of the human portion, being as the image of God; one represents him, one corresponds to him. -- **Henri Blocher, op.cit.**, p. 104

2:24-25 How does the beginning of human marriage (also, family and society) illustrate the inviolability of covenant? (Matt. 19:3-9 -- note how the response reflects the "escape clause" mentality of human covenanters; but a covenant of grace is the opposite of obligation -- one is bound by CHOICE)

This does not denote merely the sexual union that follows marriage, or the children conceived in marriage, or even the spiritual and emotional relationship that it involves, though all are involved in becoming one flesh. Rather it affirms that just as blood relations are one's flesh and bone, ... so marriage creates a similar kinship relation between man and wife. They become related to each other as brother and sister are. -- **G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15** p. 71

... not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near to his heart to be beloved. -- **Matthew Henry, Genesis to Deuteronomy** p. 20