

# Genesis Bible Study 2

## The Broken Image – One God and One Humanity: Can God be Trusted?

taken from

### *Salvation for the Social Order: For Those Who Haven't Read the Bible and for Those Who Think Religion is Merely a Private Matter*

by Philip E. Friesen

**Reading:** Genesis 2:4-25

**Principal Question:** What is the meaning of "human"? (continued)

**Main Point:** Humanity is One as God is One.

#### New Themes

1. The Dust of the Ground (v 7)
2. The Breath of Life and the Tree of Life (v 7,9)
3. The Knowledge of Good and Evil (v 9,17)
4. Death
5. Oneness or Unity
6. Shame

#### Old Themes

1. Governing the Creation
2. Tilling the ground (v 5,15)
3. Classifying the animals (v 19)
4. Male and Female (v 21-25)
  - Male and female, as one flesh, predicts the establishment of one race, and one humanity, to reflect Divine Harmony

#### Discussion

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word, human?
  - An individual person?
  - A race of people?
2. What are the sources of human existence (v 7)?
3. What difference is there between human life and other animal life, if any?
4. Describe the relationship between humans and animals in Genesis 2?
5. What is the difference between sexual reproduction among animals and gender relationships among humans according to your experience and observation?
6. Choose a word to describe the man/woman relationship in v 22-23.
  - Equality
  - Hierarchy
  - Other\_\_\_\_\_

7. Choose a word to describe the man/woman relationship in v 24-25.
  - Equality
  - Unity
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which is the most important relationship according to v 24, husband and wife, or father and son?
9. Which relationship is more important in your cultural background?
10. How many gods did you find in Genesis 1?
11. How many human races are there in Genesis 2?
12. Today, is there only one human race, or many races that are human?
13. Does this observation help you understand what is meant by the "Image of God"?
14. Discuss what it means to be "naked and not ashamed" (v 25).

### **Further Notes on the Creation**

- Image of God:
  - In ancient times in the Middle East, when a king captured a city in war, he made an image (or statue) of himself in a prominent place in that city. When people looked at the image, it told them to whom the city belonged. The idea is that when any spiritual beings, devils, angels, etc. see humans managing the earth, they will know that the earth belongs to God, and not to them. Humans are also supposed to know that the earth belongs to God and not to them. There is another idea present in this metaphor. The statue of the king is a carving or portrait. Sometimes an artist will make a painting or sculpture of oneself. The idea is that every person is a painting of God, and humanity is the great self-portrait.
  - God is one with himself in diversity of persons, which we have called Trinity. In order to reflect the character of God, humanity must also be one with itself in diversity of persons so that the creation can be governed with integrity.
  - When creation was complete, God saw that every distinction of creature and kind was good, and God stopped creating. Every individual thing was a thing of integrity with its own beauty and purpose, to be appreciated by any observer, and especially by God, while at the same time integrated in unity with everything else.
  - In Genesis 1:26-28, the image of God is "male and female". These are not two images of God, but one. At the end of Genesis 2, the two become one flesh, demonstrating that despite diversity of persons, the essence is one. There is one humanity and one Deity. This is God's self-portrait. This is the image of God.

- The Meaning of Person:
  - Relationship Defines Being
  - Identity is a complex of relationships in a hierarchy of importance. Even though every individual person and thing has integrity and value as God's artistry, that value is derived by relationship to the whole. The man and woman are defined first as belonging to the creation, and therefore to the Creator, and secondly as belonging to each other. In the same way every other created thing also can be known only by relationship to something or someone else, as belonging to a class and order of creation, such as matter or energy, vegetable, mineral, gas, etc. The same principle of relationship defines each person in the social order.
  
- The Power of Naming:
  - Genesis 1:26-28; 2:19-20
  - The man was given power to name the animals. This implied sovereignty. In the Bible, the power to name reveals sovereignty (see Figure 1 – attached). The one who gives a name is superior to the one receiving the name. A family name reveals to which clan one belongs. The parents bestow a child's given name because the child belongs to them. The designation Mexican, Russian, Chinese, African, Indian, etc. implies sovereignty over the person named. Scientific classification of species gives the classifier power to study and manipulate the items or life forms so classified.
  - The name that is shared – The man has sovereignty over the other creatures, but shares sovereignty equally with the woman in Genesis 1-2. In Genesis 2, when the man saw the woman, he immediately gave his own name to her, recognizing her to be equal in essence and in status to himself. In Hebrew the man is called "ish", and the woman is "isha", the second name sharing the status of the first.

### **The Meaning of Human and the Meaning of Gender (Genesis in Simple English)**

When God made heaven and earth, before there were plants, or rain, or anyone to farm the land, the LORD GOD made Adam<sup>1</sup> from the dust of the ground, breathed life into him, and he began to live. Then the LORD made a garden called Eden, and put the man there.

The LORD put beautiful fruit trees in the garden, and in the center were the Tree of Life and the Tree to Know Good and Evil.<sup>2</sup> The LORD told the man to take care of the garden. He gave the man permission to eat of any tree except the tree of Knowing Good and Evil. He said, "If you eat from this tree, you will die the same day".

The LORD GOD said, "It isn't good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable partner for him". He brought all the animals and birds to the man to see what the man would call them. The man named all the animals, both wild and domestic, but none was suitable to make a partner for the man. So the LORD GOD put the man asleep and took out one of his ribs. Then after closing the man's side, the LORD made a woman out of the rib.

The LORD GOD brought her to the man, and the man exclaims, "At last here is one like me, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. She will be called 'woman' because she came

out of 'man'".<sup>3</sup> That is why a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife; so that they become one flesh.

Although the man and woman were both naked, they felt no shame.

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<sup>1</sup> Adam in Hebrew means man and sounds like the Hebrew word for ground, "adama".

<sup>2</sup> Or Independent Moral Judgment.

<sup>3</sup> In Hebrew, "ish" man, "isha" woman.

### **Further Bibliography on Male and Female**

- Leanne Payne, *The Broken Image*, Crossway Books 1981.
- Donald Joy, *Bonding, Relationships in the Image of God*, Word Books 1985.
- Shanshan Du, *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs*, Columbia University Press, 2002.