

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

Part VII

Last issue, as we looked at Genesis 1:26, we began talking about the fact, God is a Triune Being, and that we are made in His likeness. This issue, we want to continue that discussion.

In an attempt to understand the concept of existing as a triune being, many illustrations have been used. Two of the most popular Sunday school versions has been an apple and an egg. The concept being that an apple has a skin, meat and core, yet it is all one apple. Some of the things the apple example lacks are better shown in the illustration of looking at an egg. Eggs are also made of three distinct parts, and the parts are more clearly defined. The egg, of course, has a shell; it has a white; and it has a yolk. Even though it's made of three very distinct parts, it's still one egg. These simple examples attempt to give us some idea of what it means to say three parts of God, yet still one God.

Beyond that, there are varying levels of understanding of this point. Martin Luther described the trieness of God as being like three rings which interlock with each other. This is actually one of the best descriptions, I believe, I have ever heard. However, the description I like to use is of three circles, one at each point of a triangle. God The Father being the circle at the top of the triangle, The Holy Spirit being the circle to the left of God The Father, and God The Son (Jesus Christ) being the circle to the right-hand of The Father. Then, I believe we should erase the line at the bottom of the triangle which goes between Jesus and The Holy Ghost. This represents not only the trieness of God but also the connectivity within that trinity. I do not believe Jesus Christ and The Holy Ghost communicate directly between each other, but all the connectivity between God The Son and God The Holy Ghost must go through God The Father. This is one of the reasons why Jesus was fully God, yet He always talked to The Father. I believe this example helps us to understand ourselves and the way in which we were created, as well. If we use the same model, and we place ourselves; body, mind and spirit, into

the same configuration with the same connectivity, then we understand a little better of how we were created to work. First, we would put the mind in the top circle, then we would put the spirit at the left-hand of the mind, and we would put the body (or physical) at the right-hand of the mind. Even though we have three parts, the spirit and the body do not communicate directly. The only connection is through the mind.

I know this is a lot to take in all at once, especially if you've never taken time to consider this before! However, as I said in our last issue, there will be many times throughout this study when we will get a chance to talk about how this all works, in greater detail. The better we understand the Word of God, the better we understand God. The better we understand God, the better we understand ourselves. So, it's my hope that through this study you will gain a better understanding of all these things. For now, it will have to be enough to simply try to understand, there are three parts of us which were created, and that is what God meant by making us in His own image.

So, verse 26 tells us we are made in the image of God; we are made in His likeness! Now, keep in mind, this does not mean we are god's or that God intends for us to become gods. The reflection you see of yourself in the mirror is not you, nor is it going to become you! If someone makes a clay model of you, it's a likeness, but it's still clay! This wording simply means God used Himself as a pattern to make us. He then places us in this world to have responsibilities over the world. One of the reasons man is so far away from understanding God is because we do not think in the terms of responsibility. We think in the terms of power. God is all powerful, that also makes Him all responsible. What God gave us when He put us here was not power but vast responsibility! From the very beginning of God's thoughts, as given to us in verse 26, He intends to make us in His image, in His likeness; and then to give us a dominion or responsibility over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle, and over all the earth and every creeping thing that

creepeth upon the earth. God, making this determination in verse 26, tells us in verse 27 that is exactly what He did; and so through these two verses, we see not only the thought of what God wanted, but the fact, God did not vary from that thought. It tells us He carried it through to completion. This is the beauty of chapter 1 going through the entire process and wrapping it up, and then chapter 2 giving us more of the specific details of the creation and of the Sixth-Day! So, now we will turn to chapter 2 verse 4 and begin to look at the words there, so that we can talk about the further creation of man in its detail.

Verse 4 and 5 begin to explain to us the purpose of the Book of Genesis. It tells us this is the entire account, beginning with the creation, and then continuing on to tell us the story of how the human existence came to be. From this simplistic beginning, we understand the makeup of the Scripture. Genesis is truly God's account of telling us where we came from, how we developed, the steps we went through, and much of the mind of God. It also goes through telling us the process in which God would go about to save fallen man; and so it tells us how God developed a specific group of people through Abraham, which we know today as the Jewish nation, and through them, He would send The Saviour for all the world. The remainder of the Bible is an account of historical facts and prophetic words which show us how the plan unfolded from there! All the way through the coming of Christ (who is The Saviour of the world), and finally ending with prophetic words to help us understand, not only the future as it comes to pass, but many events of the past as well. So, as we begin here in the fourth verse of chapter 2 of the Book of Genesis, you begin to realize, we are stepping into the story of our existence as told by God Himself.

Verse 6 of chapter 2 tells us a little bit about how the creation was set up to care for itself, specifying to us, there was no rain (verse 5) but mist (verse 6) which went up from the ground and watered the whole face of the earth. We have talked about this in an earlier issue and will talk about this fact more when we get to the story of the flood. Verse 7 starts with the details of exactly how man

was created. Once again, we have talked about God speaking things into existence. We have talked about God commanding parts of His creation to "bring forth," but now we find God goes a step further when it comes to the creation of man. He literally comes down and forms man out of the dust of the ground. This truly separates us from everything else which exists. This makes man truly special! He does not exist simply because God spoke him into existence. He does not exist because a part of creation was commanded to bring forth. He exists because God specifically formed him! Now, it's true, we were formed from the dust of this earth, but keep in mind it's only the physical part which was formed from the dust. The physical part of us is the part we need, to be able to interact with the environment God created for us. So, it's only logical, the physical part would be formed from the earth itself. However, remember the earth originally had no power over us like it does the plants and animals. They were brought forth by the strength of the earth, but we were made by the hand of God. Thus, it needs to be emphasized, once again, that we are not part of the ecosystems of this planet, but we were told to care for it!

After forming the physical form, God breathes the "breath of life" into its nostrils. This does not mean the physical is nothing more than a shell. This is just a way for us to try and understand how God put us together. Verse 7 tells us, man became a living soul! This is really the first wording which shows us we were meant to live for eternity. We are not just a functioning organism; though it may seem that our physical form is nothing more than the animals, and that when a significant part fails, we will die. No, that is just the reality of the physical world God created. God gave us the Tree of Life so our physical form would not fail, and it's the blessing of this tree which we lost at the fall! This means, our physical part will fail someday. However, when that happens, there are two other parts of us which will still be very much alive! This is why Jesus describes death as going into outer darkness. (Matt. 8:12) Those two parts God put with the physical will no longer have the eyes to see, ears to hear, or any other senses that are necessary for our ability to interact with anything physical.

Job talked about the fact, a tree has hope to live again, but man when he is cut down is lost. (Job 14) This is because a tree is simply part of the cycle God created. The fact one dies only means other things will grow from the nutrients it returns to the soil. For plants and animals, there is a kind of reincarnation - if you will. Not unlike the fact, the water goes up into the sky, falls back to the earth and runs back to the sea again. However, man has not this hope. When he loses his physical form, it does not grow back. You will not come back to this earth as a rat, cow, or any other life form. We were not created as part of the cycle! Therefore, the Bible tells us it is appointed once for man to die (Heb. 9:27-28), not over and over! You may not like it, but that is the way God created things. There are many things in this life people do not want to accept. There are things the Word of God tells us are not right for us to do. People get tired of hearing about these things. They say it's not important we learn the righteous ways of God, but what most do not understand is that the Bible is not a list of dos and don'ts. It's telling us not to put the square peg into the round hole!

God did not simply come up with the things He tells us are sin because He decided not to let us do certain things. He laid down a creation which functions on a basic plan. It's God's desire to teach us how all this works, but we continually rebel and believe we can figure it out all by ourselves! It really saddens me how many people say they are living for God, yet they do not care about these very things. They believe "salvation" is some kind of magical ticket they can put in their pocket, and when this life is over they can simply pull it out and use it to enter Heaven. This is simply not the way things work. There is no magical ticket! You must understand, there is a right way to live, a God created way to live, and everything else is a distortion of the truth. You must decide The God created way of life is the one you want. If that is not what you want, then this life is all there is, because there is no point in living a life outside of creation. (Prov. 14:12) However, for those who choose The God created way, there is life everlasting. Why? Because that is how God created it!!! Now, for those who choose to live the created life, you will still

find, no matter how hard you try to live the life, you will still face death. So, we need some big time help, and the fact this help is available is the ultimate message God is trying to get out to men!

God gave His Son (Jesus Christ) so we could be **SAVED** from the death of these physical forms. Through Christ, God made a way for us not to simply go out into "outer darkness"! If we will put our faith in God, then when the day comes that we face death, we will find Jesus has prepared a way for these bodies to be replaced! Beyond that, we will find the new bodies will no longer be able to be corrupted by sin (Rom. 6:23), and this will ensure eternal life!

Getting back to the creation story, we move on to verse 8. Here we find, not only were we formed by God separately from the rest of creation, but we also find God specifically creates a starting place for us. The earlier verses of Genesis tells us, animals filled the sky, the water, and the earth, but God only creates one man. Then we see God planting a garden as a specific place to put man. This is a fascinating part of the story and should not be overlooked! Here is another evidence that man is separate. Plants and animals live and die in a continual cycle, but man is given a place to begin his journey! It's also interesting that man's journey immediately begins to play a part in God's life. Before the sixth day is over, we find God responding to facts which come out of His interaction with Adam, and Adam's interaction with the creation! In our next issue, we will begin by talking about "The Garden of Eden" and its significance! So, walk with God in the coolness of the evening, and I'll see you next time!