

## Genesis and Creativity

I love the book of Genesis and I'm going through it again. First, a basic premise that I view Genesis from is that there are amazing creative acts of God revealing the beginning of the universe and the earliest history of man and the earth. The earth and indeed, all creation was made not simply good, but "very good." The world endured a curse because of man's original sin and then ongoing sinfulness and rebellion. This is important to me because the Word tells us that although "by one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ...where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." The work of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, is to recreate an even better world, to be "life giving" and to be able to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy:

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;  
And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.  
But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;  
For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing,  
And her people a joy. [Isaiah 65:17-18]

The first Adam caused the curse of the earth through the introduction of sin and death. The Second Adam rolls back the curse on Mankind and all of creation as "creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

That "new creation" is now transpiring before our eyes as the power and depth and breadth of salvation and redemption reach throughout the entire world, for the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Paul writes about this unleashed creative power in his second letter to the Corinthians:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. [2 Cor. 5:17-19]

I am repeating much of what I've written earlier to put into perspective my observation from two passages from Genesis that I think are important for Christians today to think upon. The first is located within the story of Noah and the Flood and it is a covenant that God makes not only with Noah and all mankind, but--

"...with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth" [Genesis 9:9-10].

What is God's covenant that He makes even to "every beast of the earth"?

"Then the Lord said in His heart, 'I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth' [Genesis 8:21].

From that point of time forward God declares that He will "never again curse the ground." This has profound implications for the future and should especially be noted by those Christians who are

terrified by the fearful predictions of harmful "climate change," i.e. global warming, or even scare stories of a supposed increase in "natural disasters" taking place on a global scale due to man's influence. Ain't going to happen! God will not curse the ground for man's sake. Creation will not be condemned and cursed because of the sins or actions of mankind, and the supposedly earth-destroying release of Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere (even if you believe it's being released through man's evil heart and actions). God has made a covenant that from the Flood forward there would not be additional global curses on the ground, and in fact, the promise in Christ is that there would be the release of the earth to produce as originally planned with the roll back of any curse from sin. While there may (or may not be) any global warming taking place, the Good News is that it will not be a curse but a blessing!

My second thought comes from the account of Babel and God's division of the world's population as a result of sin through the confusion of their language, or the creation of many languages and on how He is reversing this as well.

Because of evolutionary myths that influence our thinking in so many ways today, it may startle us to read how incredibly brilliant, creative and productive man was early in history (mankind was made in the image of God, lest we forget) when we are made privy to a conversation between the Godhead in Genesis 11:6.

"Indeed, the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them."

Wow! Working together there is essentially nothing that they cannot accomplish! Now in this passage, due to the fact that "the imagination of man's heart is evil" and the founders of Babel were attempting to thwart God's plan, He stops them almost instantaneously by destroying their ability to communicate and collaborate.

However! And I love this: Sin was the cause of man being separated from God and from each other. However, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," and now we're seeing the outflow of God's love for the world as we become ministers of reconciliation ourselves. This results in an ever improving world (even if it's taking place in an uneven or start and stop manner). One of the amazing ways this is taking place is through our increasing ability to communicate effectively, or to put it in a clearer light, how the Holy Spirit is working to overcome the chaotic, divisive effect of Babel's language splintering.

On the day of Pentecost the nations and languages of the world were represented in Jerusalem and...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" [Acts 2:4-12]

The first miracle of being filled with the Spirit is that everyone could understand everyone else! Now there's a lot of theological ideas to unpack here, but one of the works of the Spirit is to bring about a unity in Christ and to tear down any walls that divide, to make many people part of one body. This work of the Spirit rolls back the curse of chaos and replaces it with voices of clarity and purpose. Taking a small leap (perhaps more like a skip may be a better way to put it) an article in my favorite theological publication, the Wall Street Journal, highlights the power and effectiveness of the linking of people from any and all countries to work together to solve problems.

Titled The New Einsteins Will Be Scientists Who Share: From cancer to cosmology, researchers could race ahead by working together--online and in the open, the author highlights this:

In January 2009, a mathematician at Cambridge University named Tim Gowers decided to use his blog to run an unusual social experiment. He picked out a difficult mathematical problem and tried to solve it completely in the open, using his blog to post ideas and partial progress. He issued an open invitation for others to contribute their own ideas, hoping that many minds would be more powerful than one. He dubbed the experiment the Polymath Project.

Several hours after Mr. Gowers opened up his blog for discussion, a Canadian-Hungarian mathematician posted a comment. Fifteen minutes later, an Arizona high-school math teacher chimed in. Three minutes after that, the UCLA mathematician Terence Tao commented. The discussion ignited, and in just six weeks, the mathematical problem had been solved.

Other challenges have followed, and though the polymaths haven't found solutions every time, they have pioneered a new approach to problem-solving.

While not "Christian" in the typical sense of having someone give their testimony for Christ as to how they thought of this, I believe this is nothing other than the outworking of the "new creation" brought about through the work of Christ and through the power of His resurrection. Whether the people engaged in this are Christians or not they are without a doubt living, thinking and working in a world that is ruled by Christ and flooded with His Spirit. It is culture saturated by Christian ideas and transformed lives that makes this possible. God's declaration of "peace on earth and good will towards man" is so powerful and all encompassing that we're overcoming language barriers and prejudices in ways that were unimaginable in the past. Through Jesus Christ, "in Whom we live and move and have our being" and through Whom, as Paul writes in Colossians 1:19-20, it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" we are reaping an incredible benefit of progress. I am even emboldened to state that as the language and national barriers are eliminated and people can communicate clearly and unhindered, "nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them" and the creative, productive aspect of man that he was created for will be released in ways are truly amazing.

While it is true that we continue to see and experience the very real and present effects of sin in the world, the reality is that every day the kingdom of God is growing and throwing back the work of Satan. May the Kingdom of God come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven!