

but to give us what we've asked for ... which is separation from him.”^[6]

Principle 11: God puts the Fall right through Christ Jesus.

This is the promise God makes in Gen 3:15. All Scripture after that is about how God the Father establishes a people for Himself who can become a home for His Son, as a true man with us and the true God with God. The Gospel reveals the Son as the last Adam, living in full obedience, even to death and thus undoing the devil's work. The Acts and the Letters reveal the Spirit generating a born-again people in Christ. And then guiding, empowering, and equipping them to offer God's new birth to all, so they too can be transformed through faith and obedience into Christ's image.

What we lost of our Godly image through the Fall will be restored, for Jesus is “the image of God”, and we “are being transformed into Christ's likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” [NIV 2 Corinthians 3:18b. See also 1 Corinthians 15:42f]. In our resurrection into the new creation, our bodies will once more be truly triune, our flesh and souls being ruled by an enhanced God-filled spirit. We shall no more be naked nor ashamed and we shall once more know God the Father and Jesus personally for ever and always, and indeed like never before.

Until then Revelation tells us: Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who is right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy. [NIV 22:11] Thus God continues to let people make the choices they make, whether that is for choosing to obey Him and live with Him, or to disobey Him and be eternally separated from Him.

All this is what makes witness to Christ Jesus so vital, for all who do not turn to Him, who are not rescued by Him, remain under the rule of the god of this age, and can neither be justified, nor glorified in new life. [Romans 8:30]

All Bible references are to the New International Version. Other references:

[1] Quoted John C Lennox. P48 'Gunning for God'. 2011 Lion Hudson Ltd

[2] Meyer speaking in Strobel, c4 p74 The Case for a Creator 2004 Zondervan

[3] Ibid, Lennox, p35 [4] see eg Kidner p 46 'Genesis' IVP 1967

[5] Matthew Barrett p 168 'God's Word Alone' 2016 Zondervan

[6] see J P Morland in Lee Strobel in Objection 6 'The Case for Faith' 2000 Zondervan

Let's Read the Bible! *Genesis 1 to 3* No 8 in our occasional series

Introduction

This is too large a passage to go into detail in these brief formats, rather we can identify certain principles which can help our understanding.

Principle 1. Christian faith and science both recognise that the universe is orderly and so can be sensibly investigated.

Physicist Paul Davies, who is not a Christian, recognises that “even the most atheistic scientist accepts *as an act of faith* [italics mine] the existence of a law-like order in nature that is at least in part comprehensible to us.”^[1] Indeed it was the very idea that God created an ordered universe that inspired Theists [God believers] to study it.

Principle 2. God created everything from nothing ...

Hasn't science disproved God as creator? Doesn't science offer views of how things are without the need to invoke God? The issue is how you interpret what you find. As Stephen Meyer says “Scientific evidence actually supports theistic belief...[eg] If the laws of physics are fine-tuned to permit life, as contemporary physicists are discovering, then perhaps there's a designer who fine-tuned them ... [and] “the fact that most scientists now believe that energy, matter, space and time had a beginning is profoundly antimaterialistic.”^[2]

But you can see the same evidence and interpret it atheistically, like Hawking who said: “Our universe and its laws appear to have a design that is tailor-made to support us That is not easily explained and raises the natural question of why it is that way...[this] could lead at least some of us back to the old idea that this grand design is the work of some grand designer.” Which he would not do, rather he proposed that “our universe seems to be one of many, each with different laws.”^[3] So it's not about the facts per se, but the beliefs you bring to interpreting them. By their faith many scientists are not willing to see God in what the heavens declare.

Principle 4. God made an orderly creation. ^[4]

From out of nothing God created a framework for everything and then filled that framework with life:

Framework for Life

Day 1: Light and dark

Day 2: Sea and sky

Day 3: Fertile earth

Fullness of Life

Day 4: Lights of the day and night

Day 5: Creatures of water and air

Day 6: Creatures of the land

Principle 5. God the Trinity made us in His own image.

The New Testament reveals that God is Triune. And Genesis hints at the fact: God Father, Son and Spirit interact together to make everything. And at the climax of their work they pause and declare - and so stress that this is the climax, that this creature is what all else is for - "Let us make man in our image."

We know our DNA overlaps with lower order creatures. Evolutionists argue that this points to common ancestry, but it just as easily points to common design. We should not confuse similarity with purpose. Concrete paths and concrete towerblocks share similar content but they are designed for different purposes. We have common design features with other animals yet we alone are made like God, made to rule creation, and made to know Him.

Principle 6. God relates to us through speech.

God reveals Himself to us through His word/Word. Scripture itself is God's word to us [see 2 Timothy 3:16]. Scripture contains God's explicit word to us: Thus says the Lord. And the centre of Scripture is the Word made flesh in Christ Jesus.

Principle 7. God made a covenant with Adam ... that is an agreement about how to live.

This covenant had a promise of eternal life upon the condition of perfect obedience, plus a warning of what would happen if Adam did not keep obedience. "Obedience to the word of God results in ongoing fellowship with the Creator, but disobedience results in separation, devastation, and disaster." ^[5] A reality underpinning both Testaments [eg John 3:16]

Principle 8. We lost our dominion.

Then comes the serpent, or the "father of lies" [John 8:44]. See how he deceives. First he puts false words in God's mouth: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any fruit in the garden.?' " His aim is to engage Eve in talk about God's word, and whether He can be trusted. When he later tries the same trick on Jesus, Jesus quotes God back, which blocks the serpent's aim but Eve gets dragged deeper into it.

The serpent then directly invites her to distrust God, "You will not surely die," by enticing her to distort her creation purpose to be like God, even accusing God of deceiving her: "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God..." See also how the serpent lures Eve into his own rebellion against God, rooted in his own desire to be God. [See Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19]

Sadly Eve did not double-check the serpent's words with Adam and triple check them with God. She made her own decision and Adam followed her folly. The serpent's victory gave our dominion to him, as Jesus acknowledged in His temptations & in describing him as the prince of this world, [John 14:30]

Principle 9: We lost our direct relationship with God and something of our image of God.

The serpent's corruption flowed: nakedness, blaming, curse, death. Creation is hurt. We are exiled. Cain kills Abel and it flows on still.

Notice our nakedness. Our bodies are triune, we are made of spirit, which gives us life, soul or mind, which gives us speech, and the capacity to rule and body or flesh, which is the framework for our being. In our original state our Spirit-life ruled our soul and our flesh, but when our soul rebelled against God, our Spirit-life diminished, and our flesh began to dominate our souls. So we saw we were naked, and we needed fig-leaves because of shame.

Principle 10. God accepts our free will decisions.

God gave Adam and Eve the freedom to choose and He respected their choice. He "has made us with free will, and He has made us for a purpose: to relate lovingly to him and to others. We are not accidents, we're not modified monkeys, we're not random mistakes. And when we fail ... to live for the purpose for which we were made ... then God will have absolutely no choice