

Lesson for August 17, 2008

Old Testament Survey

The Creation of Adam and Eve
(Genesis 1:26-2:25)

In our previous study on Creation we saw that there had to be an intelligent, organized Creator of the universe. The same is true of human life. God is the original creator of human life and, as we will see, He continues to create human life.

There are four words used in Genesis to describe the creation of original human life:

- 1) Barah - to create or to make something out of nothing.
Genesis 1:27 - "And God 'barah' man in His own image, in the image of God He 'barah' him; male and female He "barah" them. This verse describes the creation of the *soul life*, which is made from nothing.
- 2) Yatsar – to form from existing material
Genesis 2:7 – "Then the Lord God 'yatsar' man of dust from the ground." This verse describes the creation of *biological life* of the male, which by itself is not human life.
- 3) Asah – to make or manufacture after a pattern
Genesis 1:26 – "Then God said, Let us 'asah' man in Our image according to Our likeness." This verse describes the creation of *soul life* as made in the image of God, which by itself is not human life.
- 4) Banah – to build or construct from existing material
Genesis 2:22 – "And the Lord God 'banah' into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man." This verse describes the creation of the *biological life* of the female.

What we have in the above verses is biological life and soul life, not human life. When these two are combined and God breathes soul life into biological life, man became a living soul, having human life. Genesis 2:7 says, "Then the Lord God formed (Hebrew "yatsar") man of dust from the ground (biological life) and breathed (Hebrew "naphach") into his nostrils the breath of life (neshamah chayyah, soul life); and man became a living being (nephesh chayyah, literally a soul having life or human life)." "Neshamah" is the Hebrew word for the breath of God and "chayyah" is the Hebrew word for life. Biological life and soul life were imparted to Adam and Eve simultaneously. We will see that God is still the One that breathes soul life into biological life creating human life, but *not* simultaneously. There is a specific reason after the fall of man that God no longer creates human life in the same manner.

Creation of Mankind after the Fall of Adam and Eve

After Adam and Eve sinned, biological life, along with Adam's sin nature, began to be passed down genetically from the father and is "mother dependent" in the womb. The fact that all members of the human race are *seminally* present in Adam means that we were all present with Adam when he sinned. The result of his sin is that the entire race is born with a corrupted nature. (Romans 5:12, 18,19; 6:6,12, 8:3-5; I Corinthians 15:22)

Since God cannot create imperfection, it would be impossible for Him to create "corrupted" biological life. However, He can create soul life at birth apart from the corruption of the sin nature and biological life. Therefore, soul life is still imparted by God. When a fetus emerges from the womb and God breathes soul life into biological life, human life is created. (Isaiah 2:22, 42:5, 57:16; Job 1:21, 33:4; Ecclesiastes 12:7)

The Origin of the Soul

There are two traditional Christian views regarding how, where and when the soul originates. These two views are Traducianism and Creationism.

Traducianism teaches that the soul is a product of procreation. Human life is viewed as beginning in the womb at conception. There is a problem with this view, however. If the soul is propagated genetically, this would mean that the soul is material and mortal. The soul of man is said to be immortal, therefore, the problem.

Creationism teaches that the soul is created directly by God and joined to the body. Among those that hold this view, there are varying thoughts on when ensoulment takes place. Some say at conception, some say during the nine months of pregnancy and others say at birth.

Let's see what God's Word says about when ensoulment takes place.

First we must consider a few Hebrew words and clarify their meanings. Breath of life in the Hebrew is "neshamah hayyah" and means the spark of life or soul life; "nephesh hayyah" means a living being or human life. "Ruach" in Hebrew is translated "breath" and is a reference to the soul, the breath of life. "Ruach" is also translated "spirit" in some passages and refers to "human life." The context of the passage gives us the correct use of the word.

Isaiah 57:16 uses “ruach” to refer to human life and “neshamah” to refer to soul life. This and other passages confirm that God is still the One that creates human life. Ecclesiastes 12:7 gives us further insight. This verse tells us that biological life returns to dust and the soul (ruach) returns to God from where it originated. Isaiah 42:5 uses the same words and tells us once again that it is God who gives life. Job 33:4 is also clear that it is God who creates human life by imparting the soul at birth.

The angels rejoiced at the birth of Christ, not at His conception, which should be enough to convince us that human life begins at birth outside the womb. (Luke 2:7-14) However, we will examine other passages to show that human life begins at birth, not at conception nor during pregnancy nor as a result of procreation.

In the Book of Job we see several passages that refer to birth. (Job 1:21, 3:11, 10:19) In all these verses the preposition “from” (“min” in Hebrew) is used with the noun “womb” (“beten” in Hebrew). The phrase “from the womb” is “mibeten” in Hebrew, a combination of our two words. This is important to note because the primary meaning of “min” is separation. Therefore, “mibeten” literally means separated from or away from the womb.

In Isaiah 44:2, 24 we have “Thus says the Lord who made you and created (yatsar) you from the womb (mibeten).....” “Yatsar” means to create life from existing material (biological life) away from the womb. (Isaiah 49:1, 5)

If these scriptures are not enough to convince us, certainly Jesus fully understood when human life begins. In John 3 we have a story about Nicodemus, a Pharisee that came to Jesus at night to inquire about salvation. In the process of explaining salvation using the “birth” analogy to Nicodemus, Jesus teaches that human life begins after birth (outside of the womb). Notice that Jesus did not say, “you must be conceived again.” Just as physical birth is the beginning of human life, spiritual birth is the beginning of spiritual life.

God’s Word always teaches that birth, *not conception*, is the beginning of life. Conception can only produce biological life, but only God can create human life. He does this by imputing soul life to biological life at physical birth. At the second birth (salvation) God imputes His righteousness to human life producing spiritual life. God’s grace is continually operational in the life of the believer from birth to eternity.

Now let's consider similar words in the Greek of the New Testament, which confirm the fact that human life begins after birth, outside of the womb. When the Scriptures were translated from Hebrew into the Greek Septuagint, the translators used "ek koilia" and "ek gastros" for "out from the womb" and "separated from the womb" in Isaiah 42:2,24, 49:1,5. (The Greek Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Old Testament). The Greek word "ek" is used to represent the Hebrew word "min" and are both prepositions denoting separation. What we have is either "ek koilia" or "ek gastros" that mean the same as "mibeten" – separated from the womb.

Conclusion

God is the creator of our original parents, Adam and Eve. In their cases God created biological life and soul life simultaneously, creating human life. God still creates human life, by creating the soul of mankind and imparting it to biological life at birth. Man is not a product of some evolutionary chain that began with an amoeba. Man did not evolve from monkeys. God created the first human beings and continues to do so.

It should be a great encouragement to each of us as believers in Christ to know that the God of the Universe wants to have a personal relationship with us. The same God that planned, designed and created every living thing is concerned about you and your life. He knows the number of hairs on your head and He knows what you're experiencing right now. He has also designed a wonderful plan for your life. This plan begins when you accept Christ's payment for your sin. Afterwards, God's plan for you is to consistently learn, believe and apply His Word. This is how we learn to execute the Christian Way of Life.