

LESSON 11



THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF MAN

Scripture Texts: Isaiah 42:12; Deuteronomy 30:19; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Matthew 10:28

In this lesson we learn the study of the origin of man should include more than biology, and the study of his spiritual nature involves more than psychology.

A boy received a beautifully painted wagon as a gift. He thought it would make very nice kindling, so he broke it into very small pieces. It did make good kindling, but it was made for a higher purpose. In the use many people make of life, it appears that they have not considered our origin, our ultimate destiny, nor the reason we are here. The study of man is not complete until the spiritual and religious realms have been explored. In the Bible is found material needed for an adequate study of man's origin and nature.

MEMORY VERSE: *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."*

Genesis 1:27

Man Is of Divine Origin

It is important for man to know where he came from. If where I am now has a bearing on where I am going, then where I came from may have much to do with my present state. If I am not the child of the persons I have been taught to believe are my parents, then I am not the person I think I am. That may make a great difference when it comes to dividing the inheritance.

Man is the crowning glory of God's creation, as we read in Isaiah 45:12. When God had finished His work, He said that it was very good. Man, standing as he does at the apex of creation, should be conscious of his honor and of his responsibility.

The creation of man was the fulfillment of a plan. Before the act of creation God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." God made man from existing materials that He had created earlier, but a new act of creation was necessary in making him, for there is something about man entirely distinct from all other creation.

God breathed into man the breath of life. This made man a twofold being: the outward man and the inward man. The presence of the spirit is necessary to the life of the body, and all our spiritual activities are dependent on the ability of the body to function. There can be no spiritual functioning in a dead body; and the body cannot live but disintegrates when the spirit leaves it.

The spirit of man is the intelligent, responsible part of man. He has the power to choose whether or not he will fulfill his responsibility to God. The outward man is the physical body that must perish though the inward man remains forever. Animals, unlike man, do not live forever. Killing the body refers to physical death. Man can kill the body, but he cannot kill the soul. The destruction of the soul must come by means other than physical force.

Man in the Image of God

The Scriptures inform us that man was created in God's image. This does not refer to the physical form of man, for God is Spirit and has no physical structure. It is the inward man, the spirit, that is in God's image. We read in Genesis 2:7 that man became a living soul.

God is a Spirit, a self-conscious, self-directing Person. He possesses intelligence, emotions, desires, and the power of decision. He is a moral Being insisting on the distinctions between right and wrong. He has a sense of justice and also shows mercy. In man's moral nature he is less like the animal and more like God, until sin depraves this moral nature. Man experiences those deeper emotions of love, sympathy, pity, forgiveness, mercy, patience, and kindness that are far above the instincts of beasts. This is intelligence given by God only to man.

The functioning of conscience marks man as related to God. He has a memory that will live as long as the spirit lives and will remind him that through the freewill choice that God gave him, he chose either to do right or wrong. One outstanding quality that marks man as related to God is his ability to enjoy fellowship with God and to commune with God. The greatest quality is the consciousness of being forgiven of sin and to have God's approval on his life once again.

We all will be held accountable for the choices we make.

JUST A THOUGHT

Freedom is not the right to do as you please, but the liberty to do as you ought.

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