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during COVID-19

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16 August 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs
viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Genesis 1 & 2
Ian Rutherford

Great Texts of the Bible #2
In his own image

Prayers of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Benediction



Christian Apologetics
Scholarship and Education
- CASE - is published by
New College at the UNSW
and can be found at
case.edu.au

NOTICES

16 August 2020

Wednesday 19 August

1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time

Sunday 23 August

11 am Great Texts of the Bible #3.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member:
Elizabeth MCCARTHY.



and

Joy HILL ministers with
Pioneers in Hungary in an administrative
capacity..



MEMBERS who wish to continue their freewill offerings may use the banking details at the bottom of this page or post to our Treasurer. Vic Ansell, 59 Queen St Kangaroo Flat Vic 3555.

GARDENIA ST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
53 Gardenia Street,
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BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

16 August 2020



Imago - Point Blank
Art Gallery NSW
Godwin Bradbeer

WELCOME



The authorities harassed journalists for expressing their views peacefully, sentencing at least five to prison terms for "insulting" public officials and apparently targeting others with spyware. They restricted the rights to freedom of association and assembly by preventing some groups critical of the authorities from operating and using unnecessary or excessive force to disperse demonstrations in Morocco and Western Sahara. Security forces arrested and detained thousands of migrants, forcibly transferring some to the south of Morocco and others to other countries. Women continued to face discrimination, including sexual and other gender-based violence.

Amnesty International 2019

Christian faith is often met with hostility in Morocco, both by authorities and communities. Moroccan law criminalises "shaking the faith of a Muslim". This puts many Christians who talk to other about their faith at risk of arrest. Converts often face immense pressure from family and friends to return to their former religion.

The Moroccan government looks at the church with suspicion. With citizens expected to be loyal to Islam, king and country, Christians are viewed as a threat. Leaders exhibit intolerance towards Christianity and do not fully recognise the right to religious expression. Believers are frequently detained, questioned or ostracised for following Jesus.

Moroccan Christians meet in house churches because they cannot meet together publicly. Many keep their faith a secret, especially those in rural areas who face additional pressure and restrictions.

Open Doors 2019

Great Texts of the Bible #2 Genesis 1 and 2

Sermon
Notes

John invited us to connect with the story of the Bible. So we have come to look at the opening chapters of the Bible. Today they invite contrasting approaches. One is that archaeology has uncovered much about the world in which the book of Genesis was written. The other is that the benefits of a science and technology have caused us to give unquestioned priority to a scientifically informed world-view.

1 Genesis and Babylon

The Genesis creation stories come from the Ancient Near East to us as an inspired alternative to the Babylonian creation story, the *Enuma Elish*. Although there are surprising points of similarity Genesis presents a radically alternative account. You can read about them at <https://biologos.org/articles/genesis-1-and-a-babylonian-creation-story/> Or in CASE New College UNSW (see over). Consider these contrasts:

1. Babylon presents many warring gods - Only One God
2. The world is the product of chaos and conflict - God speaks order
3. Humans are created to serve the gods - God's Image bearers

Pete Enns writes: "Genesis 1 is a bold declaration that the God of a tiny nation with a troubled past is the one responsible for what you see. The gods of the superpowers didn't do it, Yahweh did. In the ancient world, those are fighting words."

2 Two narratives, one Gateway.

Genesis 1 and 2 are two inspired and complementary stories. Like two pillars of a massive gateway they present us with an entrance to the whole Bible.

If read for scientific information or as modern documents they will disappoint. They were not written to answer questions of science.

There are points of congruence. As Professor Sir John Polkinghorne puts it "Modern science is very friendly to Christianity, I think they are really cousins under the skin".

However the Genesis stories address the deep and searching questions of meaning posed by human beings in every generation.

"Who am I?", "Do I matter?", "Why am I here?" "Is there a God?"

When we ask such questions what does Genesis teach us?

3 God, with two Names.

God is. God comes first. The Bible writers pre-suppose this. They do not argue or try to 'prove' this. God is the Reality behind everything.

God is good, and the world is repeatedly "good" or "pleasing" in fact it is all "very good"(1:31). The aesthetic and moral implications are weighty. All things bright and beautiful, with all things of moral and ethical virtue have their origins in God.

God is named. The Names used are *Elohim* (which is a plural word) and Elohim speaks in the plural "we will create"(1:1), but is also personally known as *YHWH* (2:4) "the LORD". A name whose meaning is not explained until Exodus.

4 God's Image, male and female.

Men and women are created in the image of God (Imago Dei). It's as if God had made a temple and completed the work by installing the image of the deity, human beings.

Genesis 2 presents this harmony as an intimate fellowship enjoyed between God and humans in a garden paradise. No other ancient creation story compares with this.

The American Declaration of Human Rights of 1776 declares: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights..." Is this "self evident"? Thomas Jefferson only applied it to white land-owning males. Nevertheless consideration of the Imago Dei has singularly influenced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed by most of nations.

5 Oh no, overreach.

The story moves rapidly beyond primal bliss. Sages can reflect on this story for a lifetime, but a child can grasp its meaning. Desiring to be as gods, the man and the woman overreach themselves and break faith with their Creator (Genesis 3). This is the worst thing that has happened to everyone.

This is your problem, and my problem. It is the problem which the Bible uniquely addresses. We need to be rescued. Like John the Evangelist, we will find our salvation here.