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(chronologically) to the existence of *morally culpable* human beings!

But what of God's declaration in Gen. 1:31, that everything was "very good"? Were Adam and Eve not duped if the world around them was, in fact, full of corruption and death? He even recognises, of course, that the historic Fall occurs *chronologically* in space and time but his solution to the dilemma posed by his theodicy really takes the cake:

"This seems to raise a difficulty, however, because humans who have yet to sin come into a world where natural evil is already raging. Starting their materialistic existence in such a world puts them at a disadvantage, tempting and opposing them with evils for which they are not (yet) responsible. **The Garden of Eden, as a segregated area in which the effects of natural evil are not evident** (one might think of it as a tropical paradise), provides the way out of this difficulty" (p. 151, my emphasis).

"In the Garden of Eden ... the originally intended perfect world, there are no pathogenic microbes and, correspondingly, there is no need for Adam and Eve to have an immune system... In the imperfect world [bordering Eden on every side], whose imperfection results from God's acting to anticipate the Fall, both pathogenic microbes and human immune systems exist. Yet, in their Garden experience, Adam and Even never become conscious of that difference" (p. 153).

But, far from resolving Dembski's dilemma, a far greater difficulty is created by this suggestion, one which he appears not to have considered; God is now guilty of deliberate deception because His words about the perfection of "everything He had made"² is rendered utterly hollow and false!

Sop to evolutionists

Dembski makes clear that theistic evolutionists can adopt his theodicy too, as long as they take on board his explanation of Eden. Adam and Eve, in this view, are soul-less humans

that God takes from the corrupted world and places in the perfect garden.

"Any evils humans experience outside the Garden before God breathes into them the breath of life would be experienced as natural evils in the same way that other animals experience them. **The pain would be real, but it would not be experienced as divine justice in response to wilful rebellion.** Moreover, once God breathes the breath of life into them [and places them in Eden], **we may assume that the first humans experienced an amnesia of their former animal life**" (p. 155, my emphasis).

Again, how does God avoid the charge of deception in this view? I do not want to cast doubt on the sincerity of Dembski's faith, but human ingenuity is a very poor substitute for faithful acceptance of God's Word. And if this doesn't seem to sit right with my mental environment, it is the latter that must change—my mind must be brought captive to the Word of God. Tragically, Dembski's arguments attempt to make Scripture bow the knee to 'millions of years'—it's just the latest in a long line of examples of Christians failing to accept the authority of the Word of God.

My plea as I conclude: Let us not shrink from embracing biblical Creation, without compromise. (*End of article*)

(Endnotes)

¹ For example, this is implicit in Hebrews 11:3 which says of the people of faith of the Old Testament, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them..."

² Gen. 1:31 refers to the entire work of the six days of Creation, not merely the environment and inhabitants of Eden.

*Faithfully in the Lord
Dr SH Tow, Sr Pastor*



CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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THEME: *"Walking with God in Perilous Times"*
(2 Tim 3:1)

Senior Pastor: Rev Dr Tow Siang Hwa
Pastor: Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew

LORD'S DAY, 5 Sept 2010

PANDAN NEWS WEEKLY

Vol. 7 (36) No.36

My dear readers,

The 'problem' of evil and the supremacy of Scripture - II

Theological gymnastics result in placing 'science' as an authority over Scripture

[Last week, part I referred to the work of evangelical Philosophy Professor William Dembski, who acknowledges that the Bible plainly teaches that death and suffering entered the world through Adam's sin, but who acknowledges that the fossils show death and suffering, and wants to keep the compromise idea of 'millions of years'. So what is his 'solution'?...]

The Fall was also retroactive!

Mankind's Fall into sin, he argues, was not only proactive (marring the creation *since* Adam) but was also retroactive. Yes, that's right! All the natural and moral evil in the world, since time began, are due to Adam's sin, even though Adam didn't rebel until very 'late' in the chronological time frame! He argues that God's time is kairological—from the Greek word for time, 'kairos' (as in 'a welcome time', 'the right time'), as distinct from 'chronos' which is time by which we set clocks, compute chronology etc. The Fall, argues Dembski, must be understood in this way. Only *then* can we solve the dilemma of death and suffering 'before' the Fall.

Test an idea by its fruit

Predictably, however, seeing the Fall in this new 'light' means that other plain truths of

Scripture must be explained away. Aside from the fact that this is yet another attempt to avoid the plain teaching of the Bible (when it does not fit with one's mental environment), Dembski's retroactive view of the Fall is ultimately bizarre:

"Accordingly, the Fall could take place *after* the natural evils for which it is responsible. ... Likewise, an omnipotent God unbound by time can make natural evil predate the Fall and yet make the Fall the reason for natural evil." (p. 50)

Dembski claims that there is a theological precedent for such a reading of Genesis 1–3 because "the saving effects of the Cross ... are held to act not only forward in time but also backward" (p. 50). However, this is completely unconvincing—Scripture does teach that the work of Jesus' redemption, wrought at the Cross, transcends time¹ but never hints at anything resembling Dembski's thesis regarding the Fall of Man. Consider the following assertion (p. 145): "To make us realize the full extent of human sin, God ... allows natural evils (e.g. death, predation, parasitism, disease, drought, floods, famines, earthquakes, and hurricanes) to run their course *prior* to the Fall. Thus, God himself wills the disordering of creation, *making it defective on purpose.*" In other words, God did this in advance, pre-empting the rebellion of Adam hundreds of millions of years before he would even exist. If so, He actively cursed the real world with disease, decay, death and relentless suffering for untold eons *prior*

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**A very warm welcome to visitors and friends in the name of
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**

HFMD Alert - In line with MOH public advice with regard to the HFMD situation in Singapore, parents are urged to ensure that their children do not come to church if they display any of the symptoms of HFMD, namely fever, mouth ulcers and rashes on the palms, soles or buttocks. Thank you for your co-operation and consideration.

DESIGNATED LOVE GIFT ENVELOPES are available at RPG Rack.

2. **CONGRATULATIONS TO WOON KWONG & DAWN** on their holy matrimony on 4 Sept.
3. **PASTOR QUEK SUAN YEW** is preaching at Faith Presbyterian Church, Perth this morning. Please uphold him in prayer. He returns tonight.
4. **ABC CLASS** - There will be no ABC class today. It will resume the next Lord's day.
5. **AF 30TH ANNIVERSARY.** All AF members are requested to collect their anniversary souvenirs comprising a key chain & bookmark by today.
6. **AF CHOIR PRACTICE TODAY.** 12.30 pm in the 3rd level Sanctuary. We are preparing for presentations at the Mandarin Anniversary worship service and GAPPI, Batam Anniversary service in October. All adults are welcome to join.
7. **CHILDREN IN ADULTS' TOILETS** - A gentle advice to parents, in particular, fathers with daughters 2 years and above: please do not take them into the adults' toilets but to the "handicapped toilets" (one on the ground floor level next to the office and one on level 3 next to the Sanctuary) and the children's toilets. Thank you kindly for your co-operation.

PARKING NOTICE

For Members and Visitors

- * Calvary Pandan B-P Church (English & Mandarin Congregations)
- * Truth B-P Church

Please note and comply

1. Parking in **HEAVY VEHICLE LOTS** is an **offence**. You may face legal action.
2. The **CHURCH FRONT ENTRANCE** must be **KEPT CLEAR. PLEASE DO NOT PARK THERE.**
3. If you **DOUBLE PARK**, please remove your car promptly after service.

Thank you for your co-operation.

The Management
Calvary Pandan B-P Church

<p>YAF RETREAT - 9 to 11 Sept 2010 Austin Hills Resort, Johor "SPIRITUAL FREEDOM" A thematic study on Romans 6 - 8 By: Jose Lagapa * Registration Forms Available at the YAF Notice Board * For more information, please contact Hong Zhuang (91704337)</p>	<p>FCM COMBINED MEETING 24 September 2010 Theme : A Victorious Christian Life Amid Ungodly Influences (1 Corinthians 15:33) Speaker : Rev (Dr) Prabhudas Koshy Venue : Calvary Pandan BPC Time : 6.30pm (Dinner at \$3 per pkt), 7.15pm (Meeting) For dinner, please contact your respective student coordinators or Lek Xuan at 96389814.</p>
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2. The man is not an accident in the world but the central feature of God's universal design. Man is corrupted by sin. The portrait of man in the Psalter is a realistic one. Though there is little or no effort to explain the origin of the sin in man, that man is sinful is a forgone conclusion, a basic pre-position of the Psalter.

The only remedy for man's sinful condition is reorientation toward God. Divine forgiveness is readily available for those who turn to their Creator and Redeemer. The psalmists reach out pleading hands to God and beside Him there is no one to whom they would turn to for help and find completion.

PSA 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

E. Creation and Redemption

1. The two polarities are between a transcendent and yet immanent God on the one hand and sinful helpless man on the other. This polarity is resolved by God's own saving deeds i.e. by the intersection of the doctrine of creation and redemption.

What a great revelation that the Creator of the world should have intertwined His creative and redemptive designs like warp and woof, as the inspired New Testament writers transparently affirm.³ "Creation is more than the presupposition of redemption. It is God's commitment to redemption. Even though we may not have this position so lucidly set forth in the Psalms, the two doctrines are interdependent." (Bullock, 134)

2. Although the literal order of the two concepts may not be creation redemption, we will find that it is the theological order.

PSA 74:12-17, "For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. ¹³Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. ¹⁴Thou

brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness. ¹⁵Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers. ¹⁶The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. ¹⁷Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter."

NOTE — Verses 12-15 constitute the main point of God's redemption, the next two verses, vv. 16-17, is the creation theme. The basis for the psalmist's faith in God is His past saving acts (vv. 12-15). And the basis for the psalmist's plea for future acts of God's redemption (cf. vv. 18-23) is God's creative power and work. The inability of the other gods is in the fact that they did not create anything at all. PSA 96:4-5, "For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. ⁵For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens."

(Footnotes)

¹ "In general no apparent attempt has been made to legitimize anonymous psalms by assigning them to a famous person (except in the LXX). (Bullock, 127)

² Note Psalms 6, 13, 22, 28, 30, 31, 41, 54-56, 61, 63, 64, 69, 71, 86, 94, 102, and 130. These are psalms which do not fall neatly into the classification of praise or lament but rather they enfold both.

³John 1:1-18; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 1:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8. This motif is also seen in Isaiah 40:12-31; 42:5-9; 43:1-7; 44:1-8, 21-27; 45:12-17.

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F/W: Elder Goh Kee Tai*

liturgy and gospel. The gospel validates liturgy, not vice versa.” (Bullock, 128)

3. Yet the Psalter is not all praise. The emotional disposition of the Psalter alternates between praise and lament. However, the nature of the Psalter is such is that the power of gravitation is in the direction of praise. Is it not true that the worshiper finds coherence and meaning for his life in praise, not in lament? But when we find ourselves closer to lament there is no cause for disdain for the Christian, because as the penitential psalms inform us (cf. Psalm 51), a turning to the omnipotent God can propel us toward Him who can turn our reasons for lament into occasions for joy. Thus, the lament frequently breaks forth into praise or intersperses praise with lament.²

C. The Portrait of God

1. God is portrayed as transcendent and yet also immanent. The boldness of the description sometimes could give the impression of a “low” view of God or an inadequate human comprehension e.g. *Psa 78:65-66*, “Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. ⁶⁶And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.”

“Yet the anthropomorphic tendencies in the Psalms counterbalance and keep us reminded that God is close to man.” (Bullock, 131)

2. “The features of the God portrait present us with a Deity who ultimately cannot be comprehended by man, except to the extent that He unveils Himself. This is one of modern man’s problems in relating to God -- that He eludes man’s scientific analysis.” (Bullock, 131)

The Psalter also translates His immanence into comprehensible terms by relating God’s interpersonal designs and activities as He helps individuals who appeal to Him.

PSA 27:10, “When my father and my mother

forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.”

PSA 23:1, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

PSA 80:1, “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.”

PSA 42:1-2, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. ²My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

PSA 63:1-2, “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; ²To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.”

The God of the Psalter is always there, even when He seems far away.

D. The Description of Man

1. The Psalter is just as descriptive of man. Man is described in the light of God’s marvelous creation, and followed by the brevity of man’s life as seen in:

PSA 8:4, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

PSA 144:3, “LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!”

NOTE — Man’s transitory nature is placed in sharp contrast to divine constancy, which is likened to the “Rock”.

PSA 144:1 2, “Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.”

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THEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF PSALMS

A. A Repository of Israel’s Faith

1. DIVERSITY The great diversity on the Psalter is authorship. Kings, priests, prophets and commoners alike are given the same opportunity to speak to God and Israel.¹ The Psalter represents the voice of “every man”. They give us a cross section of Israel’s society. This would suggest a diversity of moods, life situations and viewpoints. NOTE: we are not referring to an ancient social pluralism but rather of a “representative approach to life and faith, with the controlling element being the covenant between God and Israel.” (Bullock, 127)

2. UNITY -- It is a unity enriched by the diversity. It is held in bounds by the covenantal element of Israel’s faith. Two component parts which demonstrate this unity are: the Psalter reveals a unity of faith in Israel’s covenant Lord; and a unity of faith in covenant responsibility. There is no room in the Psalter for nonfaith.

PSA 14:1, “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”

PSA 53:1, “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.”

Yet there is ample accommodation for a faith that can question and inquire about God’s enigmatic ways.

PSA 22:1, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? ²O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.”

The first Psalm sets forth the covenantal responsibility.

PSA 1:1, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”

B. The Praise of God

1. The Psalter offers a rich praise vocabulary. “All though the Psalms are full of the special words of praise (e.g. “Praise the Lord”), they are also replete with descriptions of who the Lord is and what He has done. The vocabulary of praise and the descriptive content are complementary.” (Bullock, 128)

2. For example, David did not stop with the language of praise in Psalm 103 but complemented it with a description of what the Lord continued to do:

PSA 103:1-4, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; ⁴Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;”

The language of praise dominates the opening (cf. vv. 1-2) and the closing (vv. 20-22) of Psalm 103. The main body of the hymn describes the Lord in terms of what He has done and who He is. “At some point, the person who praises must endow the vocabulary of praise with content. We can praise God without using the special language of praise, but we cannot long maintain the genuineness of that language without relating His being and works. In fact, the form is validated by the content. It is the relationship between

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