156 CoM 10 – Genesis 1–3, a new (old?) reading

(The second part, "the good news", will follow shortly, but here is an interruption to our scheduled programme...)

When you want to interpret a passage of Scripture, you need a framework or a thought pattern as a way of making sense of it, especially when the passage is not literal but rather allegorical. I think the technical term is a hermeneutic.

My hermeneutic today is relationship. I've looked again at Genesis 1–3 and tried to understand its significance on the basis that "Being a Christian is about having a relationship with God", which seems pretty safe ground for a hermeneutic, right?

I see Genesis 1 as God creating a place where that relationship can happen. I was really helped by John Walton's *Lost World of Genesis One*.[130–133] He sees creation not as the manufacturing of a 'thing' – the universe – but rather as a 'place'. So God creates humankind in order to have a relationship with us, and in Genesis 1 God *enters* that place.

And it was "good" (five times) and then "very good". So I read "good" as good relationships.

In Genesis 2&3, it all goes pear-shaped. How and why? At first, A&E had a great relationship with God, but it went wrong when they failed to trust God. I won't say that 'sin' entered, rather I'll coin the term 'untrust'. If you don't trust someone, it spoils the relationship, as we all know from bitter experience.

"Did God really say...?" the thought comes in, so doubt or untrust starts.

"You will be like God, knowing good and evil." Great! If we know what's right and wrong, we won't need to trust God. (Bad idea!)

Untrust then leads to fear: "I was afraid," says Adam...

...then blame: "It was her fault!" and "The snake (implied: that you created) deceived me."

More relationship breakdown: "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over over." and "Cursed is the ground because of you."

Humans were made by God and were originally good – six times it says so. But through untrust, all the relationships were broken: human to human, human to God, human to creation.

Help! We need a way to restore all those relationships.

Thank God, there was a plan, right from Day One. Just as God entered the perfect world of Genesis 1, so God entered the world of untrust, with all its suffering, in order to restore that trust, to undo the untrust.

"Jesus died for us," as Christians have said in their creeds[16] since very early days. But how is never mentioned in the creeds.

Jesus put his trust in humans and that trust was destroyed, big time! Jesus received all the terrible consequences of untrust: evil, suffering, pain and rejection. But he conquered! He broke through and, by non-violent means, he conquered the ultimate enemy – death.

"For Christ died for untrust, once for all, the totally trusting for the untrusting, to bring us back into a trusting relationship with God." (1 Peter 3:18)

What a glorious gospel!

<div align="right">Paul Bev. 08.08.21</div>