

443 Not rocket science II – Origins of love

The world system is in a mess, built as it is on people and regimes all trying to dominate one another. Obviously, that was never God's plan. God wants us to live together in love, supporting one another (especially the less fortunate [countries?]) and caring for the environment, because that's what supports the whole of life on earth.

Again, not rocket science: love + eight more fruits = world transformation.^[442]

But how did God *start* to point us in this direction, away from the 'survival of the fittest' of our caveman days (to which we've now returned, it seems)? I'm sure God has been trying to woo us away from our 'survival' mindset since forever. Right from the very first chapter of the Bible, we see God's loving provision, a loving plan for humanity. This thought has come to me strongly from re-reading, John Walton's, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (not an easy read, beware).

First check the context: in the Ancient Near East (ANE), among the world's earliest civilisations, the consensus was that the gods created the world, and the gods were capricious at best, evil at worst. You had to take the fruit of the earth and offer it in sacrifice to the gods, in order to placate them. If things were really bad, you might even have to make human sacrifices. Not good!

God started small, taking Abram on a journey, during which I assume he became convinced that actually God was loving and had created the world as a safe and beautiful place in which his family could prosper. But to live well, you had to follow God's way: love God and love one another – and love the creation too, I guess.

I've no idea when and how the written Hebrew creation account appeared, but it was presumably derived from its God-given oral base. But we do know that Jesus seemed to think those scriptures were worth paying attention to.

Now God, who knows the end from the beginning, knew that eventually humankind would learn (God would allow us to discover) a scientific understanding of creation – how the universe began. But, being wise, God realised that it was no good explaining creation scientifically. Indeed, to look at Genesis 1 in any sort of scientific way is to totally miss God's point. ('That wasn't what I was trying to explain, you daft lot!')

According to Walton, Genesis 1 tells us that God provided the world as a 'good' place for humans – that's the meaning of the phrase, 'God saw that it was good', i.e. good for humans. It was to be a place where God and humans could live and relate together well – caring for one another.

While ANE origin stories had humans serving capricious gods, with God it was the other way round: God lovingly serves humans by giving us a place, and living here with us... but humans capriciously mess it up!

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