

VI. God's Blueprint in Biblical Perspective
Foundations from Genesis
"Foundation #4: The Sanctity of Man—Male and Female"
Genesis 1–2
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To give a little bit of a review, we have looked at sanctity number one which shows us our utter dependence on the sanctity of Divine revelation. There are two books God has given to us – the book of general revelation which is the book of creation and special revelation which is God's Word. They are never contradictory. The interpreters of those two books may be contradictory but the books are not. The book of creation and the book of God (His Word) are infallible and inerrant, but they are given with distinct purpose. The book of Divine revelation is not sufficient for salvation but it is sufficient for information, and in education to the reality of God where God is to be worshipped, exalted and we're to bring right worship before God. This stands abundantly clear in creation as well as the acts of God about His creation. It is special revelation that gives us insights into the majesties of God which is known as proper theology and its implications in our life which we call practical theology. The book of special revelation is the place where we begin.

The reason I take the time to review here is because when you come to the subjects we are now dealing with, we're constantly looking at both books of general revelation and special revelation. We went from the sanctity of Divine revelation to who God is and it's God's Word that gives us the information we need to know of the majesty of God, the intricacies of God and the saving power of God. That is not born witness in general revelation. General revelation does not give us the doctrine of the Trinity, although it's the result of the doctrine of the Trinity. It doesn't give us the doctrine of salvation or reveal all attributes of God in their majesty as special revelation does. Calvin puts it this way; We are to read the book of general revelation through the glasses of special revelation. Special revelation develops your worldview. I can't think of any other book, maybe Romans, than the book of Genesis to understand the fourfold work of God in this world – creation, the fall (and God's response to it), redemption and consummation. Through these four things is how the Scriptures unfold for us. That framework of special revelation becomes the frame, filter and the focus of all those things that come to us.

I was talking with my stepdaughter about one of her majors in college which is sociology and I told her to beware of the sociologist because even Christian sociologists have a tendency to go to special revelation to nuance and make use of what they think they already know in general revelation. It actually ought to be the other way around. We ought to know the Word of God so that we have the glasses through which to read what we get from general revelation. We went from the sanctity of Divine revelation, to who God is and all that He does, to a third sanctity of creation.

When Paul goes to speak to the Gentiles, do you know where he starts? He starts at creation. When he goes to a synagogue he doesn't start at creation because they know that and he doesn't even start at sin because they know that too. With the Gentiles he starts with creation, then to redemption, then the doctrine of Providence and then the judgment and consummation. So, the doctrine of creation is absolutely crucial. As I mentioned in the last study, I'm so appreciative of certain people who I have used their materials as resources and that includes Dr. Jonathan Gibson and his material on Genesis. R.C. Sproul and his lectures on Genesis have been

very helpful. Jim Boice's commentary on Genesis and Dr. Richard Phillip's commentary on Genesis 1 have also been very helpful. Dr. Douglas Kelly and his book on Genesis, is a need to read book, and Dr. Francis Schaeffer's wonderful commentary titled Genesis In Space and Time. There are many more I could name but consider their names here a footnote in what I say in these studies. I want to give credit as I can to these who have so affected me on this subject.

Out of the doctrine of creation we run to the sixth day – the creation of Adam. Who is man, male and female? I mean right now. We live in a culture that is searching for identity and makes use of identity to divide people. Have you heard of identity politics? To handle this, we need to understand the Scriptures, the doctrine of creation and specifically the creation of man, male and female. People tend to ask the question, did Adam have a belly button? When we get to heaven, I believe Adam will be in heaven, so go check if he does, but I can promise you that he won't have one and you are about to find out why I don't think he had one. So who is this Adam and how are we to see his presence?

Here is where we start running into challenges. The first challenge we run into is that in the evangelical world they start to answer this and they look to the two books – general revelation (what does science say) and special revelation (what does the Bible say). The tendency is to be challenged to the point of sacrificing the integrity of the Word in order to accommodate the claims of science. I'm not saying we dismiss the claims of science but I do want you to know that science is not general revelation. Science is the current interpretation of men of general revelation, but it is not necessarily general revelation. In my lifetime (which is very short by the way in comparison) there has already been three different theories that have been taught in educational curriculum. There are insights and helps but we don't start with the speculations of science. Science by its very definition should not be claiming absolutes. Science is a communication of discoveries with the information now available.

We go to Divine revelation and we know that general revelation would not contradict special revelation. So, let's take a look at special revelation on this matter. By the way, preachers are interpreters of special revelation so every time you hear a sermon don't always equate it with the Word of God. You are to examine these things to see if they are so. Just like when a scientist speaks, I'm going to examine general revelation and special revelation to see if these things are so. Preachers are like scientists for they both are interpreting one of the books. It's the books that are infallible and inerrant, not the interpreters. You can say 'yes' at the moment when 'science says' but it may say something different later when more information is available or when you quit using your ideology in place of scientific analysis. So as Calvin says let's get the glasses on (special revelation) to look at the claims of general revelation and what boundaries, filter, framework does it give us concerning, not only the doctrine of creation but now the fourth sanctity – the identity of man, male and female.

When we do that at this particular time, even among evangelicals who are supposed to claim the Scripture alone is our only authoritative rule of faith and practice, there is not the going of the Scripture to general revelation but there is the going from general revelation and working with the Scripture to try and make it fit the current claims of science at this particular moment. We now have rising up different forms of what we are now calling the concerning the origin of the world and the origin of man, under the framework known as theistic evolution. From three writers that I have read, I am going to give you three of those different forms that declare who man is and where man came from. One of those writers actually had seven but I have condensed it for the sake of time and I don't think I've done injustice to it.

The first one is theistic evolution has the doctrine of the origin of man in the sense they think Darwinian evolution is right in terms of current science that there was first the apes, then the apes through an evolutionary process turned into hominids. Hominids are human like but still animal creatures that also continue to develop and the hominids eventually produce man, male and female. Then God selected two of the hominids and breathed into them a human soul. So a theistic evolutionist who believes this form will also say they believe in the special creation of Adam and Eve, but they really believe in the spiritual creation of Adam and Eve, not the physical. This person believes that God in ordinary providence of laws of evolution produce the physical and then did a special act of creation to breathe into that hominid a soul and that becomes Adam and Eve at that particular point in time. All this takes place from about 15,000 to 150,000 years ago and it depends on who is writing on this as to how long ago they think it happened.

The second form I want to give you are those who say that first one is still a little too supernatural at the moment in general revelation so this one is the ape evolution to the hominids and then the hominids to humanity, then God adopted a pair of those to make them Adam and Eve, male and female. God adopted them as Adam and Eve and became the representatives of humanity by appointment and adoption of God. I could give you the names of the evangelicals that support these but I'm not going to do that for you can do your research on this, but I would rather you not think of particular individuals while I am giving you these different forms.

The third form says there are apes, hominids, then mankind – male and female – and then God created a metaphor of Adam and Eve. The second one basically says Adam and Eve are myths and this third one claims they are literary representatives of humanity from which the myth of sin and its origin are introduced and then the framework for understanding redemption. This one is simply a literary metaphor in terms of original man, Adam, with his bride, Eve. Those three are theistic evolution.

I want to be Calvinistic here and say let's put some glasses on to go to special revelation and let's work our way from there and then we'll go to general revelation after that with a few questions. Let's look at the first statement of the creation of man from the sixth day of creation from Genesis 1:26 which says [26] *Then God said, "Let **us** (doctrine of the Trinity) make man (singular) in **our** image, after **our** likeness. And let them (plural) have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

This first account of the creation of man we now find out a couple of things. The first thing is that it is a special act of God in creation. Secondly there is Divine dignity reflected upon humanity because man is made in the image of God. Thirdly, man as mankind is singular and in creation there will be two genders, male and female. "Let them" which means Adam and Eve which is male and female or as we are about to read in Hebrew *ish* is man and *isha* is woman – reflection of man or corresponding, a helpmate to man. Here is the declaration that God is going to make man. By being made in His image, this home God has created for Him, He now appoints him to have dominion over it. Man is God's vice regent – male and female. We will get to the sanctity of marriage and the sanctity of the family so please don't turn me off when I answer the question, can a woman work outside the home? Eve did for she had dominion with Adam, for they had dominion over all the earth, but that does not diminish the primacy of the homemaker, nurturing role that a woman is particularly gifted and called to do. It is simply saying that the vice regency of man – male and female – includes Adam and Eve. Their job is to subdue the earth, have dominion over it, and be fruitful and multiply.

Here is the call, the special creation, the dignity that is assigned and this is important. Most of us think we have dignity by how people treat us and I would say no. Should we treat people with dignity? That will be a takeaway because you are treating that which is made in the image of God, but our dignity does not come by being wanted or honored by other humans. Our dignity is assigned intrinsically through our creation. God made us in His image and nothing else in creation is so assigned. There is our dignity and thus our call for respect to one another. James thankfully builds on this with profundity in that wonderful epistle. Let's look further in the text.

Genesis 1:27–31 says [27] *So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

[28] *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."* [29] *And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food."* And it was so. [31] *And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

Do birds and animals have the breath of life? Yes. Do they have a soul? Absolutely. Are they living souls? Yes, but they are not living souls made in the image of God. We will see that communicated in a very special way in just a moment. God makes man (male and female) in His image then God gives them three assignments which we call the covenant of creation. A covenant is a relationship with responsibility between a superior and an inferior. In this covenant God is the superior and Adam (male, ish and female, isha) is the inferior. The three assignments that God gives them to do are to subdue the earth (the sanctity of work – theology of vocation), rule over the creatures and thirdly, fill the earth – be fruitful and multiply. God has given them this entire creation for their sustenance, except two trees (symbols of the covenant) – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, don't eat for God is calling them to a total obedience to Him – here is what you do and you don't do that and over here is the blessing of the covenant – the tree of life. If you disobey Me then will come the cursing of the covenant – death. I believe the two symbols of the covenant were actual trees. Now let's look at another text in this creation account found in Genesis 2.

After giving us the seven days of creation, including the Sabbath, I believe Genesis migrates back to the sixth day for us and turns the microscope from the 10 power to the 30 power. This text we're about to read will bring up questions from those who believe in the hominids for they will say 'why not throw in a hominid to work the ground' but the text clearly says there is no man – male and female – to work the ground.

Genesis 2:4–7 says [4] *These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*

[5] *When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, [6] and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— [7] then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

He now takes Adam and makes a man. God creates him in two steps. Number one He makes him from the dust of the ground. There are all kinds of unbelievable speculation about this dust of the ground but I'm not going to go there other than to tell you that 90 percent of the time this phrase is used to mean top soil. Do don't get all metaphorical with it because it just refers to top soil throughout the Bible. So, what does that tell us that He takes the top soil, the dust of the ground and forms man? This act of creation is not ex nihilo (made from nothing). This act of creation is a mediatorial act, meaning God makes something from something He has already made. Now the dust of the ground came from ex nihilo for God spoke and into existence came the heavens and the earth so there is the material. When He makes Adam He goes to what He has already created from nothing to something – the earth – and takes specifically the top soil and forms and frames the man. What is Adam supposed to get done? He is to subdue the earth, fill the earth and rule the creatures of the earth. So, is it not appropriate that God would make his body from the earth? So, He does.

Then comes step number two because at this point Adam is nothing more than a corpse. God then breathes into him the breath of life. The text then says that Adam became a living soul (Genesis 2:7b) – a true man, made in the image of God. God is Spirit and He breathes into him life. Were the animals living beings? Yes, and they had the breath of life but look at the intimacy for God breathes through the nostrils. I know you may think I'm weird but when I see a TV program where they start to do mouth to mouth resuscitation I immediately go back to the creation of Adam. We think we really came up with something in that technique but it was really right back there at the beginning. God breathed into him the breath of life and he becomes a living soul. Now we see why God says this to Moses in Exodus 4:11, *[11] Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"*

This is the design of God giving us the body He wants us to have and then giving us the soul that sets us apart from all the other animals, including the species hominids. So, here is this special act of creation in both body and soul of Adam and that's what the Scriptures say. Please check me out especially if you think I have misinterpreted the Scriptures. This becomes my framework and my filter to begin to deal with all the interpreters of general revelation when I get to that point, but I'm not quite through so let's keep going.

Genesis 2:8–9 says *[8] And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. [9] And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

In other words, when God made Adam – male – there was no garden. God made the Garden after He made Adam. God made the place of His presence and communion with Adam, the Garden of Eden. After God has formed him and filled him, God makes the Garden and puts Adam within it. Now we'll get a description of the Garden.

Genesis 2:10–17 says *[10] A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. [11] The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. [12] And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. [13] The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. [14] And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

[15] The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the

garden, [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

So, a covenant has promises of blessings and promises of cursings. It has sacraments, signs and seals. In this covenant God gives them three things to do and one thing not to do – not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Clearly held out to Adam is a curse – if you eat it you die. If you are faithful in this call to full obedience then there is the tree of life that shall be given to you.

Genesis 2:18–25 says *[18] Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." [19] Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. [20] The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. [21] So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. [22] And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man. [23] Then the man (Hebrew word ish) said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman (Hebrew word isha – reflection of man), because she was taken out of Man."*

[24] Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. [25] And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

God gives Adam responsibility of naming the creatures and when you name something you have authority over it. The woman is a reflection of man because – *isha* – was taken out of *ish* – man. We see here the man is now doing his work of subduing the earth, tending the Garden, having dominion as he names the creatures and then he is called to be fruitful and multiply.

I will be coming back to this when we get to the sanctity of marriage, but notice how God says it's not good for man to be alone. This doesn't mean that God made Eve because Adam was lonely. Adam was not lonely because God walked with him in the Garden and that's enough. There is nothing missing so what does it mean that he was alone? It means that he was not capable of the covenant task of subduing the earth of being fruitful and multiply and to rule over the creation without Eve to come along side of him. Just as it was appropriate for Adam to be taken from the earth that he would rule over, fill up and subdue, Eve was taken from his side because she is the completer who comes along side of him. Yes, she worked outside whatever kind of home they had for she joined him.

God used some kind of anesthesia (smile) to Adam as he is put to sleep and he wakes up. I know he spoke Hebrew but I think Adam woke up and said "Whooooa – man!!" This is the perfect one. Eve then becomes his helper/completer. In other words, she bears the names of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Do you remember the words of Jesus? John 14:16–17 says *[16] And I will ask the Father, and He will give you **another Helper, to be with you forever,** [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.* John 16:7 says *[7] Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, **for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.*** The first helper is the Son and the other one is the Spirit. Do you see how it takes both male and female to image God? It requires both but can you see how equality is not interchangeability? We're different, different origin, both created mediatorially, by mediation with something existing, but both coming from different origins

framed to be completers with the standing of equality before God, for both are necessary to reflect the image of God.

Now I'd like to give you a couple of thoughts on this and these are your takeaways. Number one is that we learned that Adam and Eve were Divinely created, living creatures – living man – male and female. They were created specially as God breathed into them. They are bearing the image of God as nothing else does.

Secondly, Adam is the first man. All of humanity comes from Adam including Eve, not a hominid or an ape. All other men, males, come from Adam. All other women, females, Eve, come from Adam. This is why Paul says significantly and pointedly in Acts 17:26, *[26] And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.* Every ethnicity, every human being – male and female – find their origin in Adam when he was created, and includes Eve plus female offspring as well. I think this is made abundantly clear in the Scriptures.

Thirdly, man – male and female – through Adam and then the creation of Eve, are created with intrinsic God appointed dignity – made in His image. This is why John says in I John 4:20 *[20] If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.* He doesn't say that because of the love to your brother gives him dignity, no, God gives your brother dignity because God made them in His image. We argue from the greater to the lesser in order to affirm the virtues of relationships. There He establishes that Adam was created with dignity.

Fourthly, Adam is not only the father of mankind but he is a married man. God Himself performed the very first marriage. This was an arranged marriage that God put together.

Fifthly, he is not only the first man but the first Adam. There will be a second Adam. Isn't it interesting, the ancestry of Jesus was appointed the Second Adam and He comes and has descendants whereas the first Adam had no ancestry yet all of humanity are his descendants? That brings me to number six.

Sixthly, Adam becomes a type of Christ. Types in the Bible are not mythical for they are symbols from a substance that is real. The fact that Christ is the Second Adam and He is a historical reality then the type of Christ has to be a historical reality. Types are not myths or metaphors for types are historical realities that God has appointed to in some degree typify who Christ is – whether it's Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc. They are historical people and so it is with Adam. That means Adam is a covenantal man for he has an appointed covenant with God, with responsibilities, blessings, curses and sacraments.

Seventhly, he is the type of Christ who was the Second Adam but also the last Adam. That means he is a historical man which I've really already stated. Whenever I talk with people who are theistic evolutionists, I will ask them to show me the hominids. The answer I typically get is 'after they evolved into man the hominids were done away with.' My next question is, 'where did the hominids come from?' Their answer, 'they came from apes and I can show you apes.' If man did away with the hominids how come the hominids didn't do away with the apes? Were the hominids human? No, they weren't human. After Noah, could they kill a hominid and eat it, if it was just an animal? These gymnastics we go to just don't bear Biblical or even logical consistency from a Biblical world and life view.

The genealogies that are in the Bible that are comprehensive like the ones in Chronicles, Genesis 5, Matthew and Luke and Paul refers to the first Adam as well as Peter in which they all refer to him as a historical reality and placed at the top of the genealogies as the first man, Adam. None of the genealogies start with hominids. They start with Adam who is affirmed by Jesus,

Paul, Peter, the Prophets and Moses as a historical reality, made in the image of God. Adam was the first man, the first Adam, a true man and a living man. This is crucial for us.

If you do not believe in the sanctity of man – male and female – it's not surprising that you can dismiss imperfect, unwanted and inconvenient lives as meaningless. If I have a hominid that's not a man until you get a man then why wouldn't an embryo or a fetus? But they would say, that's not a real life, particularly if people are only given dignity if they are wanted, affirmed or desired. We live in a culture of death and the reason is we've lost the doctrine of creation in general and lost the sixth day of creation in particular – that man is made in the image of God and that life is sacred. No one works harder for legislative intervention and public policy that will preserve the sanctity of life, but until the doctrine of creation is once again preached from the pulpits of Christ's Church, you will never have a foundation to maintain the sanctity of life in this culture. It will simply be that life is not worthwhile unless I want it or it's perfect enough for me or if it's what I want or if it's not inconvenient, otherwise it will be expendable.

We will not get rid of racism until we understand that we are one race from Adam, with multiple ethnicities that come from Babel. All of us have our human origin in Adam – from one man He made all mankind (Acts 17). We can retard racism and praise God when we do. We can restrain it, but we will not get rid of race oppressiveness and racism, even the current mechanisms being promoted in our schools are not attacking racism for it's just exchanging one racism for another. This is why the sanctity of man is so crucial.

In the 19th century Christian preachers and theologians embarrassingly willingly embraced Darwinian origin, at least qualified with theistic evolution in order to maintain the oppression of people from another nation and sold into chattel slavery and to support man-stealing. It was the loss of the doctrine of creation that was at the root of it in the 1840s and 1850s. Do you know why Aboriginal populations in Australia, North America and Africa were slaughtered by “discoverers”? They were the leftover hominids. They weren't worthy of life. These are crucial issues for redemptive theology and public theology.

Consider the family – if we understood the sacred dynamic of how, why, where and from what God made man, male and female, and the dignity of it, then we wouldn't let the culture shame us away from a Biblical complementarianism. Notice I said Biblical and not a cultural complementarianism and we're not even going to be able to preach Christ. To preach Christ I have to preach that you need to be saved from sin. Where did the first sin come from? It came from the first Adam. Where did my sin nature come from? It came from the first Adam. As long as pulpits attempt to explain away the creation of Adam they are not going to preach on sin, for we've lost the very origin of sin. If there was not a first Adam whereby we fell into sin, who needs a Second Adam and where is the theology of the Second Adam in whom I have life?

I Corinthians 15:22 says [22] *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive*. In Adam when he sinned, we sinned – his seed. Who is the seed? All humanity. Who is the seed of Christ? It is the elect. All of Adam is lost, all of Christ will be saved. The very covenant theology and typology of Christ the Second Adam is at stake in this. The very Gospel is at stake – not simply common grace, public theology, but the preaching of redemptive theology. I'll be coming back to this in future studies.

I believe we're going to meet Adam in heaven for I believe he was saved. We can't miss the part when God came looking for Adam in the Garden, just like God came looking for you in your sin. It's called calling. He found Adam and Eve in shame and guilt. People generally think their shame and guilt came after Eve ate but it came when Adam ate for he was the covenant head and responsible. Adam should have crushed the head of the serpent and he should have

said to God, 'Don't take her but take me.' That is what the Second Adam did – He crushed the head of the serpent and sat there silent as a Prophet. What does Jesus do when Satan comes? He quotes the Scripture to him in the wilderness. Here is Adam, east of Eden and here is Christ, east in the wilderness. Adam sins and is silent with the Word he had been given to be the prophet and protector of his wife. When she sinned, he gave her over for his own sin and didn't take her place, but you have a Second Adam who spoke the Word. The first Adam gets driven out of the Garden by the angels – Jesus comes out of the tomb accompanied by the angels and leaves the Mount of Olive accompanied by the angels. This is the Savior, who when He withstood the temptation with the Word of God in the wilderness was ministered to, by the angels. We'll never really preach the Biblical Christ until we grasp the Biblical Adam. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Thank you for those who are working through this with me and we give You praise and thanksgiving and ask that Jesus be exalted and Christ be glorified as Creator of the first Adam and the Second Adam who gives us redemption and brings us home. I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.