

by Peter C.

What human characteristics indicate that we are uniquely spiritual? What indicators from history and archeology distinguish us from the other creatures? What does the historical and scientific record tell us about the date of human origins, and how does that date align with the Biblical account of Adam and Eve?

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." This claim is made in Genesis 1:27 and indicates that we possess characteristics unique to humankind. According to Hugh Ross in *A Matter of Days*, "As humanity's story unfolds throughout the rest of the Bible, the reader discovers the quality that makes people unique - the "spirit" breathed into them by God. None of the rest of Earth's creatures, past or present possess it. The "spirit" supplies awareness of God, awareness of self, and capacity to form a relationship with the Creator." [1].

In *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Duffield and Van Cleave outline the following distinctions regarding man's creation:

- (1) Man is created by God,
- (2) Man alone of all created beings received the breath of God,
- (3) Man is formed in God's image,
- (4) Man is created for God's glory,
- (5) Man was planned and designed in a council of the Triune God, and
- (6) Man has been redeemed by the God-man Christ Jesus. [2].

The authors go on to interpret what "created in the image of God" or *Imago Dei* means:

- (1) that Man was conformed to an ideal form which God possesses,
- (2) Man's dominion over the earth and its creatures,
- (3) Man's rationality and ability to have communion with his Creator,
- (4) Man's personality of intellect, emotion and will,
- (5) Man's original holiness, righteousness and moral nature, and
- (6) Man's triune being of body, soul and spirit. [3].

A number of indicators from history and archeology distinguish us from the other creatures. First of all, mankind is unique in that we have the ability to worship our Creator with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. History and archeology are both replete with evidences of mankind's expressions of worship. Ross points out that

"the universality of worship is evidenced in the universality of altars, temples, and other religious relics. Burial of the dead, tool use, or even the inclination to decorate fall short as evidence of the spirit. Nonspiritual creatures such as elephants, chimpanzees, and bower birds (which decorate their nests) engage in such activities to a limited extent. [4]. Secondly, mankind is unique in our ability to communicate. True, other creatures can communicate in a variety of ways, but our ability to communicate using the modalities of language and literature far surpasses that of any other creatures. History and archeology are replete with examples of ancient literature and languages from some of the earliest known civilizations, such as Sumer. "To the Israelites of Biblical times Sumer was an ancient, classical civilization, similar to what ancient Rome is to us...The Sumerians created the world's earliest writing system, cuneiform, a method also used with another ancient language Akkadian. Sumerian cuneiform was in fact the basis for the creation of Akkadian cuneiform...Sumerian literature includes hymns, proverbs, love poems, laments and epic myths, and there are interesting Biblical parallels in these Sumerian texts" [5]. Thirdly, mankind is unique in that we desire to understand, to know, to explain. This leads us to scientific pursuits so that we can better understand and utilize nature and the world around us. Archeology reveals that "Sumerians invented the wheel, the potter's wheel and the sexagesimal numbering system, and compiled collections of laws. In architecture they developed the arch, dome and vault. Incredibly, 100-foot-tall Sumerian ziggurats - pyramidal, multistoried temple towers - still survive" [6]. This is also an example of the fact that creativity is unique to the human race as well. Another interesting distinction between mankind and animals is that man has a great capacity to give and receive love. Sexual expression in the animal kingdom is merely for procreation, whereas with mankind it is not only for procreation but also for communication and oneness between man and wife. As evidence for this, consider that fact that man is the only creature where face-to-face sexual intercourse is common. According to Jack Hayford in *The Anatomy of Seduction*, "We're created to face one another. I don't want to seem tawdry in saying this, but a man has two hands that desire to touch a woman's two breasts. Lovemaking, kissing face-to-face and seeing each other eye-to-eye provide the far deeper possibility of expressing affection to a person, making it much more likely that a man and woman will truly be together as one" [7].

According to Ross, the biblical genealogies provide a rough date for the advent of humanity. "If the life spans recorded in the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies are approximately proportional to the actual passage of time, then the dates for Abraham and Peleg would place the Flood of Noah's day roughly 20,000 to 30,000 years ago and the creation of Adam and Eve a few tens of thousands of years earlier" [8]. However, there is a lot of room for variation because the time between "generations" is not always clear in the genealogies, so the interpretation for the biblical date for the creation of Adam and Eve probably falls sometime between about 10,000 and 60,000 years ago. How does this line up with the historical calendar? "The earliest advanced art (for example, sophisticated cave drawings of animals and hunting rituals) dates back 33,000 years. Archaeologists see a "big bang," or sudden burst, of jewelry making - actually outstripping toolmaking - that

dates to 40,000 years ago. This date coincides with the first evidence for clothing. The earliest evidence for complex language also dates to about 40,000 years ago. Thus, the archaeological dates for the beginning of spirit expression and human consciousness appear consistent with the biblical dates" [9]. There is also scientific data to support the Biblical interpretation of the date of human origins. Biologists have found that mitochondrial DNA and a large portion of the Y-chromosome do not recombine in reproduction. Nearly all of the mitochondrial DNA is from the maternal gene pool, while only men carry the Y-DNA. By measuring mutation frequencies, scientists are able to extrapolate the time back to the most recent common male and female human ancestors. "These dates are 37,000 to 49,000 years ago for the most recent common male ancestor (Noah) and about 50,000 years ago for the most recent common female ancestor (Eve)...This variance is consistent with the biblical record, since the four men on Noah's ark (Noah's sons) would carry Y-DNA from the one man, Noah, whereas the four women, not being blood related, could have mtDNA extending much further back in time, possibly all the way back to Eve" [10].

[1] Ross, Hugh. *A Matter of Days*, Navpress: Colorado Springs, 2004, 222.

[2] Duffield, Guy P. and N. M. Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Foursquare: Los Angeles, 2006, 122.

[3] *Ibid*, 123.

[4] *Ibid*, Ross, 222.

[5] *NIV Archaeological Study Bible*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2005, 10.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Hayford, *The Anatomy of Seduction*, Regal: Ventura, 2004, 122.

[8] *Ibid*, Ross, 223.

[9] *Ibid*, 224.

[10] *Ibid*, 225.