

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

In the beginning the human race was created perfect, along with the rest of creation.

“God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). Man was created in the image of God and made to live on forever. “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” There was no sickness sorrow or death. God then gave him stewardship over creation with a dominion mandate to rule and keep it.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth” (Genesis 1:26).

Man’s “Dominion Mandate”

Man exercises his “dominion mandate” when he improves varieties of vegetables and fruit trees. He is also filling this role over the animal kingdom when he improves milk production in cattle and egg production in chickens. Man has been experimenting with genetics like Jacob did with selective breeding to get the cattle he wanted (Genesis 30:40). In recent centuries man has greatly improved varieties of fruit, vegetables, and livestock from the original native strains. Gardening magazines advertise high producing varieties and are constantly bringing out more hybrids and improved strains.

All life has multitudes of DNA strings of genes in the nucleus of each cell of its body. From the big blue whale to the lowly earthworm. From the bird to the to the COVID-19 virus. Every living thing! DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) originated when God wrote the original genetic codes for every living organism on creation week—perfect! However, with the fall of man the curse of sin brought genetic defects into the gene pool.

Because of new knowledge and techniques in science we face new life issues today that we did not in the past. Many have found life extended through procedures such as cell therapy that would have suffered and died without it. Through these procedures many now have life improved and lengthened. These are legitimate uses of the dominion mandate.

Medical scientists continue to advance in the knowledge and manipulation of the basic genetic building blocks of life. Most scientists do not have scruples of conscience about altering or destroying life. They are now working with genetics to eliminate the cause of biological defects in infants and many other issues with plants and animals. Many also see this as a new field of commercial value. Businesses are rushing to use the new information to produce new products. There is nothing to stop it but God. We will be challenged more and more with the ethics of some of these procedures and products.

Editing the Genome

But scientists are also going beyond correcting defects to altering genes that are normal to suit personal preferences. “Designer babies” may have their eye color changed, receive genes of strong athletic achievers,

or of a high academic intellect and such like. This is getting into the area that Hitler wanted to tamper with to make a superhuman race.

A recent magazine article, explained how a new tool CRISPR/Cas9 is used to edit the genome. This is the long string of DNA information with millions of bits of information for every detail of a body. Scientists are also finding the genetic defects for more and more biologic disorders. Scientists can point CRISPR at a certain place on the genome and use it as a molecular scissors to cut and disable or repair a defective gene. They acknowledge that it also does some damage to surrounding off target genes. But they say the damage is minor! Who really knows? The big issue is, whether we are correcting effects of the curse (diseases or handicaps), or if we are tampering with God's design which is out of bounds. Scientists who experiment with human embryos and then destroy them are committing murder.

God's Code Book

The Psalmist tells how genetic information is active in bringing substance out of nothing in forming an infant. *"In thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them"* (Psalms 139:16). Books carry information in black marks on white paper. The human genome also carries the code of life which God translates into substance in forming a new body for a new soul. From this "unperfect" (not imperfect v.16) beginning man is an eternal soul that God knows.

This is such an amazing phenomena that the Psalmist David exclaims *"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works and that my soul knoweth right well"* (v.14). The DNA's intricate detail is described as being "knit together" (or embroidered). It is a twisted double helical coil that has rungs like a ladder. It splits and joins to a half that splits from the partner's DNA. In this way God makes a new creature with possible traits of both parents.

The primitive material of our being is described as "my substance" which was known ("not hid") to God from its beginning. Man has no business dabbling in this area, least of all in a capricious effort to please his whims of curiosity. He does not have the ability or integrity to intrude into these areas and undo the design of God. This has gone far from God's original plan for husband and wife to join as one to raise up a Godly heritage.

A Reprehensible Action

In 2018 a doctor in China took the step to edit genes of human babies. Twin girls were born in which Dr. He Jiankui had used CRISPR to edit normal genes into a mutant form that prevents HIV from entering cells. We see another effort here of man to annul God's judgment on sin—to be immoral without consequences.

But this tampering with the genes in one area has shown in tests to cause multiple negative effects, causing a weakness to other viral infections and shortens life. This experiment with human life by the doctor and the girl's parents is inexcusable. These "germline edits" are different from previous gene therapy in that the change is encrypted in all their cells. It will be passed on to their children, along with off target effects, and spread out in the human gene pool to future generations with unknown results.

Ever since creation and man's fall Satan has been working to corrupt the human race, created in God's image. This makes one wonder how long God will tarry till He consummates the age. He ended it before when "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" beyond remedy (Genesis 6:12). Such perverse ways is the reason God implemented the plan of redemption and gave mankind his word in the Bible to live holy and acceptably before Him. But for those who reject God's Saviour Jesus Christ, there is a reckoning day when all men will give account of the deeds done in the body.

*“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. **For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil**”* (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28).

~Elvin Stauffer

Resources:

1. *The Bible*, Psalms 139:13-16 Our “substance” is fashioned - “curiously wrought” (embroidered or knit together”)
2. *Answers Magazine*, January, February 2021 – CRISPR : A Clear Cut Issue?”