**After its Kind?**

We read an unexpected break in the pattern. On day three God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so.” (Gen. 1:11). This is the first time the word “kind” is used in the Hebrew Old Testament. It doesn’t mean “species”, but more closely to “family” or perhaps “order”, if you are familiar with the science of taxonomy. Then on day five, “So God created the great sea creatures … according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” (Gen. 1:21).

Then on the sixth day, “And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. (Gen. 1:24). Everything but man has now been created.

Then I would expect, according to the pattern, that God would make “man after his kind”. But the word “kind” (“min” in the Hebrew language), is not used to apply to man. The pattern is broken. Now, on day six, “God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Gen. 1:26). The pattern is broken by a counsel, “let us make”. The pattern is broken by the absence of the word “kind” (min, in Hebrew). The pattern is broken by the words, “image” and “likeness” of God. Finally, the words “image” and “likeness” seem to equip and qualify man to rule over all creation. Adam and Eve are told to, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen. 1:28). Man is to “rule”.

But man rebelled against God. Yet God had a plan to solve this problem. Jesus came to earth as one who could rule over the birds and the beasts. But more importantly, rule over Satan and sin. This self-rule of Jesus, in his own person, now extends from heaven to earth. Humans can now be born again of the water and spirit (John 3:1-5), we can put on a renewed likeness of the divine nature. “you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” (2Pet. 1:4-11). To be like Jesus is to have that inner self-rule so as to always glorify God as we were created to do. We in Christ are, “to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” (Romans 8:29). I identify not as a creature kind, but in the image and likeness of God. To him be the glory!

Dan Peters