**2. “DIVINE INTENTIONS”**

**Section I:** THE ORIGINAL PLAN

**Biblical Basis:** Genesis 2 – 3

**Objective:** To identify various literary media used in Scripture to convey its message and to understand God’s original intention for His creation.

**INTRODUCTION**

As we continue in our study of Genesis chapters one and two, we need to take some time to discuss a subject that has all too often resulted in conflict between some Christians. The Bible makes use of a variety of literary media to convey its message. Are certain chapters and stories in the Bible to be taken literally or symbolically? How then are we to read Genesis 1 and 2? As Hebrew literature, was the intent of the creation accounts to be read scientifically or poetically? Can we establish the “age of the earth” from the Genesis account of creation?

These questions can only be answered when we develop a more accurate understanding of the many literary media forms that are found in the Bible.

In this study we will first identify these various literary forms and then further explore Genesis 2.

**I. UNDERSTANDING LETERARY FORMS IN THE BIBLE**

 A. Various types of literary forms and examples. (Historical reporting, poetry, personifycation, fable, allegory, imagery, symbolism, parables, etc.) Use a dictionary for

 definitions of these forms to help answer the following questions.

 1. What is Luke’s purpose for writing this Gospel and what literary label can we identify? (Luke 1:1-4; 2:1-7)

 2. What literary form does the author of Judges 5:15b-18 use?

 3. Would you call this Scripture (Isaiah 55:12b) literal? If not, what literary form would classify it?

 4. The speaker recorded in Judges 9:8-15 tells of historical events. What literary form does he use to tell it?

 5. What do you see in Psalm 80:8-12 that identifies it as an allegory?

 6. Profound teachings can be communicated through imagery and symbolism. How is Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 a classic example of that?

 7. What method or literary media form did Jesus use in His teaching? (Lu 15:3-7)

 B. Importance of understanding literary forms.

 1. How could Psalm 91:3-4 be misinterpreted if the literary form is disregarded?

 2. How could Revelation 12:3-4 be misunderstood if viewed with wooden literalism?

 3. Think about Genesis 1:5 in light of 1:14. What problems could arise if dealt with primarily as science?

 4. If someone has a problem with talking snakes and eating forbidden fruit, how can this understanding of literary media be helpful and yet establish confidence in the historicity of the account? (Gen 3:1-7)

**II. GOD’S INTENTION FOR HIS CREATION**

 A. Harmony that was four-fold: With God, self, others, and nature.

 1. How do Genesis 2:18 and 3:8 a picture the harmonious relationship **God** intended between Himself and man?

 Consider “harmony with God.” What do you think that would consist of?

 2. What does it mean to have harmony with **yourself**? (Let these verses stimulate your thinking: Psa 51:3; 139:13-14; Gen 1:26-27)

 How is harmony with self dependant on harmony with God? (Matt 22:37-39)

 3. What does Genesis 1:27 and 2:18 tell us about God’s intention in terms of relationships with **other persons**?

 Why is it important that a person have a healthy relationship with himself if he expects to have a good relationship with others? (Matt 22:39)

 4. What was God’s intent for mankind in their relationship to their **surroundings**?

 (Gen 1:28; 2:15)

 Man can use the material universe to his betterment or he can exploit it. How do you see that man’s proper relationship with nature is enhanced by his relationship with God?

 B. Harmony that was conditional.

 1. For this four-fold harmony to exist, on what was it contingent? (Gen 2:15-17)

 What gave God the right to dictate the terms on which life must be lived in the garden? (Gen 2:1-9)

 2. Some people claim that Adam was programmed to fail. How does Genesis 1:31 answer this?

**CONCLUSION**

Here we see God’s glorious intention for His creation. It was not meant to be that an angel with a flaming sword keeps man away from the tree of life; it was not meant to be for man to be plagued with fears, guilt, shame, restlessness, and frustration; it was not meant that man and nature be enemies: God’s divine intention was harmony. How are you living out God’s divine intention for your life?