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Symbiotic economics: Dry Bones Valley

Last week we used the concept of the Valley of Dry bones in Ezekiel 37, to describe not only a coming natural Israel in Ezekiel's day, but also a potential reality, resting in God's hands alone for the rest of the world.

The thought of being part of something that will be eternally significant is quite appealing. The concept itself is by definition transcendent. But if we pause for a moment to consider the detailed circumstances of what the Ezekiel 37, Dry Bones Valley coming to life again truly means, we quickly approach the frontiers of human reason. As a matter of fact and truth, by definition, while we can understand the dry bones concept, the life giving process lies completely within the scope of God's glory.

That makes it pretty clear that if we are going to be called upon in an imperative

application way we are going to be doing this beyond our comfort and security, as security is currently defined within our present world. Most people have been made so insecure in this material world that at present they are completely incapable of living with transcendence of any nature. To paraphrase an old country song "Don't Fence Me In" we have the exact opposite:

Give me stuff, lots of stuff,

*Under Hi Pressure Sodium lights
above.*

*Please Fence Me in within a
secure ghetto .*

*Let me drive through the
suburban sprawl*

That I love,

Please Fence Me in.

*Let Me be by myself in the air
conditioned breeze,*

*Listening to the murmur of the
traffic seas*



Don't send me off forever

Because it makes me quease

So I beg you please fence me in.

We could continue with the original lyrics, but then it would become too complicated to repeat as a mantra, or a church worship chorus. Furthermore mundane, mundane lyrics might make us think about something beyond our current existence and that would exacerbate our security disease, and then we may need not only medical, but external spiritual help.

In the time of Martin Luther, that Reformation relied upon the Bible as the word of God, not in the understanding, teaching, and traditions of the church. While most would not admit it, today's church is in many ways is just as removed from the true teaching and understanding of the Word of God as was the church in the Reformers day. In the Dry Bones Valley, what the Bible teaches is paramount. It is not what I think the Bible teaches, what I hope the Bible teaches, what I have been told the Bible teaches, it is what the Bible teaches in it's straight forward reading that matters. So let's start at the beginning of the Book to see what current fantasies we have totally excluded from all facets of culture about the Bible and it's word.

We covered in previous articles that the Bible says that creation took place *ex nihilo* in a period of days, very similar to our today days. At the completion of creation, including the creation of mankind, God pronounced everything very good. But have you ever stopped to think just how smart Adam and Eve and their close descendants really were? We have been indoctrinated to believe that they were just stupid cave dwellers, far worse off than the cave men in the Geico insurance commercials. We seem to think that it has been onward and upward for humanity since the beginning, and we are just baby steps from evolving into the ultimate human being. So it goes in the commercial and with our lives.

However, logically and scientifically speaking, it has really been a downward spiral for human intellect since sin entered the human race. This simply applies the laws of thermodynamics to all creation including humanity after the

fall. If you put worship and enjoying God forever as the ultimate purpose of man, as stated in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, then today's global materialism is about as far from that purpose as natural law can allow. It then only follows, unless the Lord tarries, the end of humanity will come when the residents of the Dry Bones Valley can no longer understand the gospel that Jesus Christ died for the sins of humanity and through Him alone all things, including people can become new creations.

Since we mentioned sin, what about the devil or the serpent in the Book of Genesis? Just as entropy has taken it's price on creation, it has also dismissed Satan and evil as religious superstition, unknown remnants from our evolutionary past millions of years ago. However, the Bible clearly states that evil exists, as well as describing a personality known as Satan, a fallen evil angel, accompanied by his minions, who are responsible for not only evil, but death as we know the great equalizer today.

Where did the fossil fuels come from? It is not too hard to see that the Biblical Garden of Eden was really that. That truth shows that global warming, of which we are now afraid, was once the norm. That all came to an end with the Genesis Flood. So how did sedimentary rocks get on the top of Mt. Everest? Over millions and billions of years of slow and constant evolutionary time, or one huge flood that killed millions of dead things and deposited them in rock layers all over the earth? The Bible description as transcendent as it seems, with all of the beyond stupendous change it requires, makes a whole lot more logical sense, except of course for that God and transcendent stuff.

Not only was the creation account brief, and if God created humanity at the beginning, there is only so much time you can add to the whole space time scenario, thousands of years, not millions and billions. For example today on the Jewish Calendar is 4 Kislev 5768.

Then the Bible moves on into the Tower of Babel. The entire premise of the ancient tower experiment has not changed for humanity over that period of thousands of years. *"Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."* Genesis 11:4

This concept of making a name for ourselves is the dominate concept of economics around the world today, as it has been forever. So if we would all speak just one language and live in urban centers of human design and power, there is nothing that we can not do. At least in the respect of making stuff to fill our lives.

The true reason behind global trade today is the requirement of stuff factories to provide security of industrial jobs, so we really don't have a choice of where we live or what we do, lest we be scattered over the face of the earth and have to deal with the transcendence of God's creation outside the cities. It is not that we want no part of nature, especially if we evolved from lesser animals, it is just that we want nature with only a shadow of transcendence that we can manipulate, through time, scheduling, and what we bring with us. Just as we organize the rest of our time in our busy post modern world.

We could work through the rest of Genesis, then the Exodus, and the rest of the Bible, looking at the Bible the way we would like it to read. Rose colored glasses, probably describes our generation's view of reality, especially this reality. After all those plagues of Egypt, and even the crossing of the Red Sea, never could have happened, there must be a more natural non transcendent explanation. How about a myth so that Moses could control the Jews in his desire for conquest of the peace loving people that he wanted to conquer? It makes sense today, so that must have been the way it happened.

Fast forwarding in that mindset to the present and look at the nation of Israel. It was just those power hungry rich Jews and Zionism that traces it's roots back to Egypt. If they would have just remained slaves and were assimilated into Egyptian culture, the world would be a better place today. From there it is not a big step to assimilate the Mexican illegals, ethnic Moslems, for we don't want to deal with their religion so we must combat their religious fundamentalists, and so on through out all tribes and nations of the world. All we want after all is just a little material security in our short lives, is that too much to ask?

The problem is that we look for security within ourselves, and in ourselves that security does not and can not exist. How about that for an economic reality? It has been reported that 70 percent of America's GDP gross domestic product is based upon stuff consumption. In short, if people truly look at their lives and make a decision, either freely or under other forces, and quit or can no longer buy stuff, the United States and the rest of the world is in a deep evolutionary swamp, with no where to look for help.

Well, we desire to look everywhere, except for the one source where that help may come from, the Transcendent God who created it all. And thus in this metaphor, and in reality, the evolutionary swamp becomes the Dry Bones Valley.

How do we begin to get out of our predicament is simply to look beyond the reality of where we are and ask the God of the Bible to help us with our insecurity, because deep within our created heart of our transcendent nature we know that stuff is not the answer, God is the answer. Just not any God, but the God of the Bible and the God of creation, they are one God.

That will, in God's timing, transport you from where you are now to the Dry Bones Valley. That place may be a temporary oasis, but over time as the insecure material you is stripped away, a new transcendent you will emerge from the cocoon. That tried and overused analogy has more transcendent merit than it does in speaking about only natural success. God puts some meat on your dry bones, if you are willing to let him.

How much does it cost? There in lies the sticky part. It will cost you the way you currently look at life, not only yours, but the lives of everyone else. True transcendent reality desires and does create community that the world can not now offer in all it's material wealth.

We began this article by paraphrasing the country song "Don't Fence Me In." The give me security at any cost version fits well within the non transcendent nature of most modern natural and religious music. These more relevant lyrics can be recited as you journey to your daily work, and at other times of trouble. The trouble is that while they speak of present temporal reality, they have no real understanding of transcendency.

However, every year, the Old Testament Jewish men were required to go to Jerusalem, the city of peace, to celebrate certain religious festivals. As they journeyed they would recite or chant Psalms or Songs of Assent, for Jerusalem was generally at a higher elevation than the surrounding lands. That same concept applies as you in your imperative application to put meat on the bones of the Ezekiel 37 transformation of society. It together with other similar Assent Psalms, will provide you with transcendental strength for the journey.

Not only do these Psalms speak of a natural pilgrimage, they speak of the reality of God and the reality of a coming Messiah, who Christians believe, has come in the flesh as and is Jesus Christ.

Psalm 121 A Song of Ascents.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills

From whence comes my help?

My help comes from the LORD,

Who made heaven and earth.

He will not allow your foot to be moved;

He who keeps you will not slumber.

Behold, He who keeps Israel

Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD is your keeper;

The LORD is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,

Nor the moon by night.

The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;

He shall preserve your soul.

The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in

From this time forth, and even forevermore.