



Small group study materials, November 2019

Chapter & verse – Helen Garton (page 18)

Read Genesis 1:27-29, followed by Helen Garton’s article.

1. Helen begins her article by describing the troubled times she can remember, as well as ‘moments when the world changed forever’. If you experienced those times, what were they like for you? Have you any troubled times or momentous moments to add to Helen’s list?
2. In her third paragraph, Helen argues that humanity seems to have made a mess of looking after the earth, and that individuals have been too slow to act in addressing global warming. Do you agree with this view? Why?
3. Helen’s fifth paragraph provides examples of signs of hope from the past. What signs of hope can you identify in today’s world?
4. What do you understand by God’s instruction to ‘fill the earth and subdue it’? Do you find comfort in the context that Helen provides, that people who lived during Old Testament times ‘were unable to subdue the earth in the way that we do today’?
5. The next verse on from our Bible passage tells us that God has given to ‘everything that has the breath of life ... every green plant for food’. What conclusions can we draw from this? Does it suggest that God intended us to have a plant-based diet?
6. Helen’s final paragraph explains the Hebrew word *rada*, which means having dominion in the same way that God does over us. She argues that we are called to be ‘the guardians of a better future’. What might a better future look like? What actions can we take to realise such a future?

For further reflection: ‘He is ... the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created ...’ Colossians 1:15-16

Prayer: We thank you, Father, for the trust you have placed in us, the responsibility we have for our own world. We are sorry for the ways in which we have abused that trust and failed our responsibilities. Make us better, more sensitive and more fruitful in our care for creation we pray. Amen.