

The First Man

Genesis 1:26-2:3
SS Lesson for 09/16/2018

Devotional Scripture: Acts 17:24-29

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines how God created **The First Man** and why He did. The **study's aim** is to remember that God created man to rule over all the earth. The **study's application** is to realize that if God has put us in charge of all the earth, then we have a responsibility to take care of all creation.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Gen 1:26

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

God's first creative word produced **light**. The elegance and majesty of Creation by decree is a refreshing contrast with the bizarre creation stories of the pagans. Here is demonstrated the power of God's word. It was this word that motivated Israel to trust and obey Him. The light was natural, physical light. Its creation was an immediate victory because it dispelled **darkness**. **Light** and **darkness** in the Bible are also symbolic of good and evil. Here began God's work which will culminate in the age to come when there will be no darkness (Rev. 22:5). Israel would know that God is Light—and that the Truth and the Way are with Him. In the darkness of Egypt (Ex. 10:21-24) they had light; and in the deliverance they followed His light (Ex. 13:21).

1:6-8. On the **second day** God separated the atmospheric **waters** from the terrestrial waters by an arching **expanse**, the **sky**. This suggests that previously there had been a dense moisture enshrouding the earth. God's work involves making divisions and distinctions.

1:9-13. Dry land with its **vegetation** was formed on the **third day**. **Vegetation** is part of the ordered universe of the true **God**. There is no cyclical, seasonal myth to explain it. **God** started it, once and for all. Moreover, while pagans believed in deities of the deep as forces to be reckoned with, this account shows that **God** controls the boundaries of the **seas** (cf. Job 38:8-11).

1:14-19. Day four included the sun to rule (**govern**, v. 16) the **day** and the moon and the **stars** to rule the **night**. Either these were created with apparent age, or they had been previously created and were then made visible on the earth on days one and two when **God** separated light from darkness and waters above from water below. These heavenly bodies were to **serve as signs** for **seasons and days and years** (v. 14). These terms, as well as "day" and "night" in verse 5, are meaningless without the existence of the sun and the rotation of the planets. In astrology unbelievers use stars and planets for guidance, but the Bible says they merely display the handiwork of **God** (Ps. 19:1). What folly to follow astrological charts of the

Babylonians or worship the sun god in Egypt; rather, one should trust the One who made these objects in the heavens. However, many humans repeatedly reject the Creator to worship the Creation (Rom. 1:25).

1:20-23. The great creatures of the sea and the air were created on the fifth day. In this section (v. 21) is the second use of *bārā*’ (“created”; cf. v. 1). Great creatures of the deep, worshiped as dragons and monsters in the ancient world, were nothing more than creations by Almighty **God**. Moreover, fertility of life comes from the blessing of the true **God** (v. 22).

1:24-31. Day six was Creation’s climax for it included mankind. Though **man** was the last creature mentioned in the account, he did not evolve; he was **created**. Human life was created **in** (lit., “as,” meaning “in essence as”) **the image of God** (v. 27). This **image** was imparted only to humans (2:7). “Image” (*ṣelem*) is used figuratively here, for **God** does not have a human form. Being in God’s image means that humans share, though imperfectly and finitely, in God’s nature, that is, in His communicable attributes (life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice), and so have the capacity for spiritual fellowship with Him. God’s purpose in creating human life in His image was functional: man is to **rule** or have dominion (1:26, 28). God’s dominion was presented by a “representative.” (Egyptian kings later, in idolatry, did a similar kind of thing: they represented their rule or dominion by making representative statues of themselves.) However, because of sin all things are not under man’s dominion (Heb. 2:8). But Jesus Christ will establish dominion over all the earth (Heb. 2:5-8) at His second coming. God pronounced His blessing on the **male and the female**: they were to **be fruitful and increase in number**. In Genesis, to be blessed was to be enriched and fertile. Such marvelous decrees of **God** would be significant for Israel, that was God’s representative on earth. She would enter the land of promise and would expect God’s continued blessing.

2:1-3. The seventh day was the day of rest, the Sabbath. The structure of verses 2 and 3 in the Hebrew is well ordered in its clauses with parallel emphases on the adjective **seventh**. The number “seven” often represents the covenant (the verb “swear” is related etymologically); thus it is no surprise that the Sabbath became the sign of God’s covenant at Sinai (Ex. 31:13, 17). **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy** (sanctified it) because it commemorated the completion or cessation of His creative **work**. God’s Sabbath rest became a predominant motif of Scripture. Here before the Fall it represented the perfect Creation, sanctified and at rest. After the Fall this rest became a goal to be sought. The establishment of theocratic rest in the land, whether by Moses or by Joshua at the Conquest, demanded faith and obedience. Today believers enter into that Sabbath rest spiritually (Heb. 4:8-10) and will certainly share in its full restoration. The account of Creation, seen through the eyes of the new nation of Israel in Moses’ day, had great theological significance. Out of the chaos and darkness of the pagan world God brought His people, teaching them the truth, guaranteeing them victory over all powers in heaven and earth, commissioning them to be His representatives, and promising them theocratic rest. So too it would encourage believers of all ages.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

I love watching my husband and stepchildren. For me, there are few moments in life sweeter than the ones I spend doing that. Whether they are playing a game, completing a chore around the house, or just joking around, those times are precious for me to witness. There are times, though, when the mannerisms of my stepchildren bring me an extra special smile. That happens when one of them does something like his father. Whether it is one of them standing exactly like his father or the other one repeating a phrase his father says, the mimicking of their dad always warms my heart. It reminds me of how much of him is in each of the kids. There is no mistaking that they are his children. In the same way, we were created as God’s own children. We are told that Adam was created in God’s image. It was God’s plan that people should live as His children. Do not gloss over that. Let it sink in for a minute. Think of the children in your life, whether they are your own or someone else’s. Have you ever seen them say or do something that completely mimics their parents? Did it make you smile when that happened? What would it have been like to be created in God’s own image in the time before sin entered the world? Adam was created to rule over this breathtaking world God had wrought. What was Adam really like? What was God’s vision for a blameless man? Our answer comes in Jesus, God’s own Son. Jesus told us that whoever has seen Him has seen the Father (John 14:9). As we grow closer to Our Savior, we see Him more clearly. When we grow closer to Jesus, we can better know both Him and His Father each day. Because of this, we can see what God intended for mankind from the very beginning. As we as believers draw nearer to Christ, the benefit of walking in faith is that we begin to mimic Him. God is always sanctifying us, bringing us more in line with His original vision for our lives each day. When we take Christ as our example, we reflect Him more and

more (2 Cor. 3:18). When I see my stepchildren's mimicry, it reminds me to think about whether I am reflecting Christ well. When people look at me, do they see Jesus? If not, what do I need to change? God's design for me is not identical to His design for other individuals. I know, though, that all believers are called to a family likeness to their Savior. As I come alongside Him in this purpose, He will mold me into that perfect reflection of Him that He intended. Do you reflect Jesus each day, or is there someone else that you have chosen to mimic? The person you choose to model yourself after is the person you will become. If you are modeling yourself after Jesus, then you will become like Him. If you are not, then you will find yourself drifting away from His design for you. That is a sobering thought. The question then, is, Who do you choose to mimic?

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

In the mid-twentieth century, psychologist Erik Erikson coined the term “identity crisis” to describe a developmental issue that occurs during adolescence. That phrase has since been used to describe the common plight of people wrestling with the questions “Who am I?” and “Why am I here?” The early theologian Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430) addressed this issue as he prayed, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you” (Confessions 1.1). Augustine’s words reflect the biblical texts we are exploring today. Genesis 1:26–31 and 2:1–3 teach us that God created people in his image at the apex of his creation. As his image bearers, we are precious in God’s sight, having received an extraordinary status and role within creation.

The first 25 verses of Genesis 1 narrate concisely God’s forming of the cosmos through his spoken word. In successive days, God created light (1:3–5); the sky (1:6–8); the seas and dry land (1:9–13); the sun, moon, and stars (1:14–19); living creatures that inhabit the water and the sky (1:20–23); and land animals (1:24, 25). The text’s focus throughout is on the planet Earth, either directly or indirectly. The recounting of the first through fourth days in Genesis grows longer with successive days. A reversal of sorts occurs with the fifth day of creation, as the narration becomes shorter (Genesis 1:20–23). The narration then lengthens dramatically to relate what happens on the sixth day: creation of land animals and people. By allotting only two verses to the creation of land animals on this day (1:24, 25), the author (Moses) appears in a hurry to get to his focus: the creation of humanity (1:26–31). Not included in the record are any blessings or commands God gave the land animals to multiply, as he had done to creatures of the air and sea in 1:22; compare 8:17). The author presents God’s seeing the creation of land animals as “good” even though, like on day three, he has not finished describing the creations of the day. God has created some good things during the sixth day, but there is more and greater yet to come.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

God Created Man in His Image (Gen 1:26-27)

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

In God's Image (1)

Definition of Image:

From Strong's Hebrew Dictionary

6754 tselem (tseh'-lem); from an unused root meaning to shade; a phantom, i.e. (figuratively) illusion, resemblance; hence, a representative figure, especially an idol: KJV-- image, vain shew.

From Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

The word also means "image" in the sense of essential nature. So Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" <Gen. 5:3>. Human nature in its internal and external characteristics is what is meant here rather than an exact duplicate. So, too, God made man in

His own "image," reflecting some of His own perfections: perfect in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and with dominion over the creatures <Gen. 1:26>. Being created in God's "image" meant being created male and female, in a loving unity of more than one person <Gen. 1:27>. It is noteworthy that in <Gen. 1:26> (the first occurrence of the word) the "image" of God is represented by two Hebrew words (tselem and demut); by selem alone in <Gen. 1:27> and <9:6>; and by demut alone in <Gen. 5:1>. This plus the fact that in other contexts the words are used exactly the same leads to the conclusion that the use of both in passages such as <Gen. 1:26> is for literary effect.

From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

One understanding of the image of God in man is that it refers to qualities or attributes present in the person. Thus, the image of God is identified as human reason, will, or personality. Others believe the image is something present when the person is in a relationship to God, and in fact, is that relationship. The image is present like a reflection in a mirror, rather than like a photo-- a permanent image printed on paper. Still others believe the image is something which a person does. The Bible does not indicate exactly what the image of God in man is. It may involve all these ideas. Man alone has personal, conscious fellowship with God <Gen. 1:29-30; 2:15-16; 3:8>. Man is to take God's place in ruling over and developing the creation <Gen. 1:26,28>. Yet these are possible only because of certain qualities of personality which man alone has <Ps. 139:14>. To be created in the image of God means that we humans have the ability and the privilege of knowing, serving, and loving God, and that we are most fully human when fulfilling our spiritual potential. Every human life is precious to God, and this is exactly how we should treat the people with whom we share the world.

From Wycliffe Commentary

In our image ([selem]), after our likeness ([demut]). Though these two synonyms have separate meanings, there is here seemingly no effort to present different aspects of God's being. It is clear that man, as God made him, was distinctly different from the animals already created. He stood on a much higher plateau, for God created him to be immortal, and made him a special image of His own eternity. Man was a creature with whom his Maker could visit and have fellowship and communion. On the other hand, the Lord could expect man to answer him and be responsible to him. Man was constituted to have the privilege of choice, even to the point of disobeying his Creator. He was to be God's responsible representative and steward on the earth, to work out his Creator's will and fulfill the divine purpose. World dominion was to be granted to this new creature (cf. <Ps 8:5-7>). He was commissioned to subdue ([kabash], "tread upon") the earth, and to follow God's plan in filling it with people. This sublime creature, with his unbelievable privileges and heavy responsibilities, was to live and move in kingly fashion.

From Barnes' Notes

"Likeness" is a more general term, indicating resemblance in any quality, external or internal. It is here explanatory of image, and seems to show that this term is to be taken in a figurative sense, to denote not a material but a spiritual conformity to God. The Eternal Being is essentially self-manifesting. The appearance he presents to an eye suited to contemplate him is his image. The union of attributes which constitute his spiritual nature is his character or likeness.

Created in the likeness of God (Gen 5:1)

This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

Created in the image and glory of God (1 Cor 11:7)

A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

Created by God wonderfully, starting with the inner man (Ps 139:13-14)

13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Created and formed for God's glory (Isa 43:7)

7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Created to do good works (Eph 2:10)

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Notes on the creation of man from Barnes Notes

Man in his essential part, the image of God in him, was entirely a new creation. We discern here **two stages** in his creation. The general fact is stated in the first clause of the verse, and then the two particulars. "In the image of God created he him." This is the primary act, in which his relation to his Maker is made prominent. In this his original state he is actually one, as God in whose image he is made is one. "Male and female created he them." This is the second act or step in his formation. He is now no longer one, but two, - the male and the female (*emphasis mine*).

God Created Man to Be Fruitful (Gen 1:28)

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

It is a blessing from God for man to be fruitful (28)

Children are a reward from God (Ps 127:3-5)

3 Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. 4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. 5 Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.

The man who fears God will be blessed with children (Ps 128:3-4)

3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. 4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD.

God created the earth to be inhabited (Isa 45:18)

For this is what the LORD says-- he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited-- he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other.

Man Initial Role: Ruler over all other creation (28)

God was mindful of man to allow man to be ruler over the works of His hands (Ps 8:4-9)

4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Notes on the dominion of man from Barnes Notes

God qualified man for dominion, and constituted him lord of all creatures that are destitute of intellectual and moral endowments. Hence, wherever man enters he makes his sway to be felt. He contemplates the objects around him, marks their qualities and relations, conceives and resolves upon the end to be attained, and endeavors to make all things within his reach work together for its accomplishment. This is to rule on a limited scale.

The Two Sides of Dominion (From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

The human race has condemned itself for despoiling nature, allegedly causing global warming, and abuse of our planet's resources. Some of the accusations are valid. For example, widespread use of DDT and other pesticides almost brought the noble bald eagle and other avian species to extinction. Strip mining once left vast tracts of land as wastelands upon which nothing could grow. Chemical spills poisoned the ground, and oil spills polluted the oceans. But there is also good news: DDT was outlawed and the bald eagle has made a spectacular comeback. Reforestation, restoration of landforms, and pollution controls on automobiles and industry are all part of a concerted effort to undo the damage done in an earlier, less informed era. A specific example of this turnaround is the whooping crane. Only about 20 were left in 1941; now there are about 475. There are indeed two sides to our dominion over creation: to be responsible

and to be irresponsible. The Bible calls on us to be stewards who use the earth's resources properly, resisting the temptation either to abuse the creation or to worship it. We glorify God when we are good stewards.

God Provided Man Food (Gen 1:29-30)

29 And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.

30 "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.

All "seed-bearing" plants were for Man (29)

Commentary on eating vegetables versus meat

From Adam Clarke Commentary

[I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.] It seems from this, says an eminent philosopher, that man was originally intended to live upon vegetables only; and as no change was made in the structure of men's bodies after the flood, it is not probable that any change was made in the articles of their food.

From Barnes' Notes

Every herb bearing seed and tree bearing fruit is granted to man for his sustenance. With our habits it may seem a matter of course that each should at once appropriate what he needs of things at his hand. But in the beginning of existence it could not be so. Of two things proceeding from the same creative hand neither has any original or inherent right to interfere in any way whatever with the other. The absolute right to each lies in the Creator alone. The one, it is true, may need the other to support its life, as fruit is needful to man. And therefore the just Creator cannot make one creature dependent for subsistence on another without granting to it the use of that other. But this is a matter between Creator and creature, not by any means between creature and creature. Hence, it was necessary to the rightful adjustment of things, whenever a rational creature was ushered into the world, that the Creator should give an express permission to that creature to partake of the fruits of the earth. And in harmony with this view we shall hereafter find an exception made to this general grant <Gen. 2:17>. Thus, we perceive, the necessity of this formal grant of the use of certain creatures to moral and responsible man lies deep in the nature of things. And the sacred writer here hands down to us from the mists of a hoary antiquity the primitive deed of conveyance, which lies at the foundation of the common property of man in the earth, and all that it contains.

After the flood God eventually gave both plants and meat for man to eat (Gen 9:3)

Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

God also taught Peter that all that God made is clean and can be eaten (Acts 10:11-16)

11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." 14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." 15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

All "green" plants were for Animals (30)

God provides food for all (Ps 145:15-16)

15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. 16 You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

Commentary on relationships between animals (from Adam Clarke Commentary)

It may also be inferred from this passage that no animal whatever was originally designed to prey on others; for nothing is here said to be given to any beast of the earth besides green herbs.-- Dr. Priestley. Before sin entered into the world, there could be, at least, no violent deaths, if any death at all. But by the particular structure of the teeth of animals God prepared them for that kind of aliment which they were to subsist on after the FALL.

Initially no conflicts between Man and Animals (30)

Animals were so tame that they paraded before Adam to be named (Gen 2:19)

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

Animals were so tame that Eve was not afraid to speak to the serpent (Gen 3:1)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

After the fall of man, a curse was put on the ground and the animals as well as man (Theological Interpretation) (Gen 3:14, 17)

So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

Only after the second coming will the curse be removed (Rev 22:3)

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

There will be a time during the millennium that temporary peace will be given to animals (Theological interpretation) (Isa 65:25; Isa 11:6-9)

Isa 65:25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

Isa 11:6-9 6 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. 9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

God's Evaluation and Rest (Gen 1:31-2:3)

1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.

2:2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

2:3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

The Ultimate Evaluation - Very Good (31)

God rejoices in His created works (Ps 104:31)

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works--

Everything God created is good (1 Tim 4:4)

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,

Man should always praise God for His creations even though it is beyond man's understanding (Job 36:24-26)

Remember to extol his work, which men have praised in song. 25 All mankind has seen it; men gaze on it from afar. 26 How great is God--beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.

The created heavens declare God's glory (Psalm 19:1)

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

God's creations are awesome (Psalm 145:4-6)

One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. 5 They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. 6 They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.

God made everything in its time (Eccles. 3:11)

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

God created the seventh day for rest (2:1-3)

A rest day that is holy (Exodus 20:11)

11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

A rest day that is a sign (Exodus 31:17)

17 It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested."

A rest day that can be entered (Heb 3:18-4:7)

18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. 2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. 3 Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. 4 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." 5 And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." 6 It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.

A rest day that was made for man (Mark 2:27)

27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Man's Dignity (1:26-31)

Since chapter two builds upon the bare details of 1:26-31, let us begin by considering these verses more carefully. Man, as we have said before, is the crown of God's creative program. This is evident in several particulars.

First, man is the last of God's creatures. The whole account builds up to man's creation. Second, man alone is created in the image of God. While there is considerable discussion as to what this means, several things are implied in the text itself. Man is created in the image and likeness of God in his sexuality.

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:27).

This is not to say that God is male or female, but that God is both unity and diversity. Man and woman in marriage become one and yet they are distinct. Unity in diversity as reflected in man's relationship with his wife reflects one facet of God's personhood.

Also, man somehow is like God in that which distinguished him from the animal world. Man, as distinct from animals, is made in the image and likeness of God. What distinguishes man from animal must therefore be a part of His reflection of God. Man's ability to reason, to communicate, and to make moral decisions must be a part of this distinction.

Further, man reflects God in the fact that he rules over creation. God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. He has delegated a small portion of His authority to man in the rule of creation. In this sense, too, man reflects God.

Notice as well that it is man and woman who rule: "... and let them rule ..." (Genesis 1:26, cf. verse 28).

Them refers to man and his wife, not just the males He has made. While Adam has the function of headship (as evidenced by his priority in creation, his being the source of his wife, and his naming of Eve), Eve's task was to be a helper to her husband. In this sense both are to rule over God's creation.

One more point should be made here. There seems to be little doubt that in the provision God has made for man's food, only vegetarian foods are included at this time:

Then God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life; I have given every green plant for food; and it was so' (Genesis 1:29-30).

It was not until after the fall, and perhaps after the flood, that meat was given as food for man (cf. Genesis 9:3-4). Shedding of blood would have significance only after the fall, as a picture of coming redemption through the blood of Christ. In the Millennium we are told,

The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain, says the Lord (Isaiah 65:25).

If I understand the Scriptures correctly, the Millennium will be a return to things as they once were before the fall. Thus, in the paradise of Eden, Adam and Eve and the animal kingdom were all vegetarians. How, then, can some speak of 'survival of the fittest' until after the creation of all things and the fall of man?

But more important than this is the fact that man's dignity and worth are not imputed by man, but they are intrinsic to man as one who has been created in the image of God. Man's worth is directly related to his origin. No wonder we are hearing such frightening ethical and moral positions proposed today.

Any view of man's origin which does not view man as the product of divine design and purpose, cannot attribute to man the worth which God has given him. To put it another way, our evaluation of man is directly proportionate to our estimation of God.

I am no prophet, my friend, but I will venture to say that we who name the name of Christ are going to have to stand up and be counted in the days to come. Abortion, euthanasia, and bioethics, to name just a few, are going to demand ethical and moral standards. The bedrock principle upon which such decisions must be made, in my estimation, is the fact that all men are created in God's image.

In this light, I can now see why our Lord could sum up the whole of the Old Testament in two commands,

And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Matthew 22:37-40).

The attitude of the future seems to be to love only those ‘neighbors’ who are the contributors to society, only those who may be considered assets. How different is the value system of our Lord, who said,

Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me (Matthew 25:40).

In my estimation, here is where we Christians are going to be put to the test. Some are strongly suggesting that those who our Lord called ‘the least’ are precisely those who should be eliminated from society. May God help us to see that man’s dignity is that which is divinely determined.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/3-meaning-man-his-duty-and-his-delight-genesis-126-31-24-25>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The following is attributed to Gregory of Nyssa (AD 335–395) in a treatise he wrote entitled “On the Creation of Man.” In this world I have discovered the two affirmations that man is nothing and that man is great. If you consider nature alone, he is nothing and has no value; but if you regard the honor with which he has been created, man is something great. Christians should view themselves and others as special creations of God and objects of his love and concern. Because all are made in our Lord’s image, all deserve respect, dignity, honor, and care, regardless of social status, accomplishments, etc. Moreover, as God’s image bearers, our work is a cooperative enterprise with him. Our work is exalted, holy, and spiritual. May we treat it as such!

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. We display God's image as we fulfill God's will and do His work in the world (Gen. 1:26)
2. God uniquely created mankind to have a relationship with Him, to glorify Him, and to fellowship with Him (vs. 27)
3. We care for the earth and all that God has created by recognizing God as the Owner and ourselves as stewards (vss. 28-30)
4. Everything God does is good (vs. 31)
5. God finishes what He starts—in His time and in His way (2:1)
6. We honor God when we work for Him, when we worship Him, and when we rest in Him (vss. 2-3)