

DATE: April 13, 2008

TEXT: Genesis 1:26-2:3

TITLE: "Genesis III: The Creation of Man"



I am continuing this morning looking at the creation account in Genesis. We began this look last week. I decided we needed two weeks to look at this truth. Last week we looked at creation at focused on the Creator. I shared lessons last week on the nature of God. **First last week**, we saw that God is the creator. **"In the beginning God created...."** The truth is this.... God created the world and God continues to create today. God is light... and the light continues to dwell among us. We either accept this basic truth or we reject it.

Second last week, We saw that God's creative power is by the Word. God spoke and creation took place. We saw that God created "out of nothing." God is a God of power and authority. He named the night and the day. We also saw that Jesus is the Word. The powers of God continue today in this world and in our lives.

Third last week, we saw that God declared the world "good". This week and next week we will look further at the creation.

This morning I will share one brief lesson on the nature of God revealed in text and then focus on the creation of man. I will share three lessons.

Lesson # 1 Notice the hint of the Trinitarian nature of God given in our text. *Gen. 1:26*

“Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness”

Notice that this text is in the plural. God was having a conversation. Who was he conversing with and who was he sharing creative powers with? Some say it was a court of angels. But no where else in scripture does God share power with the angels. As Christians we believe in a Triune God...Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God in three persons. One example of this is the egg. It has three parts.... shell, white and yoke. All three have different functions... but all three are necessary to have a complete egg.

No where in the Old Testament is a complete picture of the Trinity given; that picture is given in the New Testament, but upon occasion glimpses of this truth can be seen. One of those glimpses occurs here in the creation. God has a conversation with himself concerning the creation of man. Allow me to share a quote from the Pulpit Outline....

All three persons of the Godhead consulted and become personally involved in the creation of man. When the believer really meditates upon this glorious truth, his heart should throb with excitement. He sees that God planned him with a very special plan and that God cares for him and loves him with a very special care and love. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all involved in planning and creating him. God's plan for his creation was so important that it necessitated the fullness of God's presence and love and care.

The plan of God has always necessitated the fullness of God. The Heavenly Father is the source of power and guidance. God the Son was the mediator for the creation. From the beginning His death was needed to reconcile humanity to God. And God the Spirit is the ongoing presence of God in this world. He is the empowerer of God's children.

We now turn our attention away from the creator and onto the created... onto man.

Lesson #2 Men and women were created in the image of God. This is so important it is stated three times in two verses. *Genesis 1:26,26* states

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

What does this mean? What does it mean when we say you and I and all of humanity were created in the "image of God", the imago dei. This is greatly debated, but I want to share three areas where the image of God is seen in humanity.

First, in the area of physical attributes. This is not to say God looks like us. This is to say God has given humanity special qualities such as intelligence. God created humanity with the ability to think at a higher level than any other created animal and to reason and solve problems. If you think about this... this is amazing. Can you imagine creating an animal that is smart enough to disagree with you? Let us say we have the ability to create a cow or even to selectively breed a cow to gain great intelligence. The purpose of a cow is to give milk and meat. You do not want the cow to be too smart. You do not want the cow to look at you and say, *“No, it’s a nice day. I don’t want to go into the barn today. Come back in an hour.”* And you certainly don’t want beef cattle to say, *“No, I don’t want to go into that slaughter house. It smells bad.”* And we don’t want a cow to say to it’s owner... *“After a great deal of thought and study I have decided that you do not exist, so leave me alone out in this field.”*

Yet, that is what God did. He created humanity with the ability to think and reason. To the point that man could decide to disobey and even to reject the very idea of God. But God did indeed create man in the “image of God.” He gave to humanity the power to reason & think

But I believe our text in Genesis points to two additional elements of the imago dei that is found in humanity.

Second, God created humanity with authority and power. *Genesis 1:26,28 states...*

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

If God is to be King over His creation He created humanity to be His sub-regents.

Psalm 8 gives this truth...

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 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!

In a few verses further in Genesis 2:19, God gave Adam the responsibility to name all the animals. Imagine the time it took for all the animals to parade in front of Adam and he had to think of a name....aardvark , kangaroo, mosquito, and on and on and on. This is God giving to humanity authority and responsibility over creation.

We were created by God to rule this world. But as always authority always carries with it responsibility. We are stewards of this earth. To misuse the creation of God and to misuse the creatures that God has put under our authority is a rejection of the image of God within us. As men and women we are given the honor of authority; we must also take the responsibility of authority.

But there is a **Third element** in the image of God. God also created us to be people in relationship... relationship with each other and relationship with God himself. Notice our text in verse 27 *Genesis 1:27*

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them

He created male and female. Of course God created every animal male and female, but it is specifically pointed out in the creation of man. Also the rest of Genesis 2 talks about the creation of Adam and Eve. God created men and women not only to breed, but to be in relationship. Relationship is the wonderful privilege of humanity. Not just breeders... husband and wife.

That is one of the great tragedies of the last 30 years. I am not saying immorality has not always existed. It certainly has but now it is seen as accepted and normal. You go on a date and you “hook up” just to end the date. Why should you not do this? Because we are created in the image of God; we are created to be people of relationship and love. For humanity sexual union is the consummation of relationship. It is a commitment in the eyes of God... the two become one flesh. Morality is part of being in the image of God. It is God who teaches what is right and what is wrong. When a society loses it’s sense of God, it loses its morality.

But the relational aspect of the image of God does not end with the relationship of people to people. We were uniquely created to be in relationship with God. We were created with the ability to fellowship and to worship God. God said this to Isaiah... *Isaiah 43:10*

"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. 12 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God.

The role and the responsibility of God’s covenant people is to worship and to witness to the truth of God. We were created to be in relationship with God. It is part of our core being,

created in the image of God. We are given immortality to be in relationship with God, but often humanity has chosen immorality and rejected relationship with God.

Lesson # 3 On the seventh day God rested. *Genesis 2:2 states...*

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

What does this mean? Does this mean God was tired and needed a day to rest? No! God does not grow tired. *Isaiah 20:28 states....*

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

So what was special about this 7th day? Why was it “blessed” by God? Because this was a day devoted to God Himself. On the 7th day all the heavenly beings and all the newly created earthly beings gave praise to God. All of creation is to stop and praise God on the 7th day. This is clearly declared in *Exodus 20:8*. We know this as the 10 Commandments...

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 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.

Now I do not believe we need to be legalistic and say we must never work on the Sabbath Day, but I do believe a critical command is found here. We do indeed need to set a weekly time aside and dedicate it to the Lord. We need to praise Him and worship Him and remember the fact that He is the Creator and He is the Lord. We are not; life does not revolve around ourselves. Life must revolve around God. God is!

I will close this sermon with a quote from the New Testament. All of *Hebrews 4* talks about the Sabbath rest of God's people. It states this...

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. 12For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

All will give account to God. Did we choose to have a Sabbath rest? Again, this is not talking only about working on Sunday. Are we resting and seeing God as the center of our lives? Are we resting and worshiping God? Are we in relationship with God or have we chosen to ignore God? Every person will "give an account."

We have seen that we were created “good”. We have seen that we were given the “image of God.” Next week we see the fall of man. AMEN