

Day 5, Genesis 1:26-31 _____

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

It is significant to note that God speaks of Himself in the plural in v. 26: “Let Us make man...” Why is this? Interestingly, the Hebrew word for God (*Elohim*) is a plural term. However, it is always modified by a singular verb. In fact we see this in this very passage: “Then God (*Elohim*, plural form) said (singular form)...” What then should we conclude from this? As is stated so emphatically in Deut. 6:4, God is one. However, He possesses a plural nature. This dual aspect of God’s nature (both plural and singular) will become much clearer as the Scriptures unfold. Even though He is one, He consists of three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (e.g., Matt. 28:19; 1 Pet. 1:2.).

In all of God’s creation, we alone were created in His image, and this includes, of course, both male and female (v. 27), but what does this mean? In the original Hebrew, the word “image” (*tselem*) carries the connotation of a reflection. Most simply put, to be made in God’s image means we were made to correspond to God—and with the capacity for fellowship with Him.

According to v. 26, we are made also in His likeness (*demuwth*). If image is the corresponding shape, likeness is what fills the shape, and this actually reveals much about God. Because our soul is like His, His soul is like ours in that He possesses mind, will, and emotions, just as we do.

Does this likeness have anything to do with our physical composition? The Scriptures speak of how God sees (2 Chron. 16:9), hears (2 Chron. 7:14), possesses arms that reach out (Deut. 33:27), etc. With these things in mind, we can say that we were fashioned *physically* in the way that best corresponds to who God is *spiritually*. We can also say that He made us physically in the way that best corresponds to the form He would take if He took on human flesh, which is precisely what He did in the Person of His Son (John 1:14; Phil. 2:7).

The image in which we are created consists of more than our *capacity* though; it's also our *calling*. Each of us have failed severely in this calling (to live in communion with Him). How grateful we should be though for the One who became flesh for us, and all so we could be restored to the fellowship with God we were created for (2 Cor. 5:21).

28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

From one couple the entire earth would be populated. Therefore, we all belong to the same human family. Therefore, there should be no hint of racial prejudice among us.

The charge God gives to the man and woman is not just to fill the earth, but to subdue it. That is, we are to have dominion (“rule”) over it. We are to be stewards of the creation that belongs ultimately to Him, and we should do everything in our power to honor Him in this stewardship.

Have we allowed the powerful truths of this passage to go deep within us? We are made in the very image of God. Therefore, what incredible dignity we possess. We are human, not divine, and this is a bridge that will never be crossed, whether in this life or in the

next. However, how overwhelming it is for us to realize though that the eternal God made us to correspond to Himself.

And what an incredible responsibility He has given us to exercise dominion over the earth. He has also given us a vast array of resources with which to do this, and all of them are drawn from His miraculous creation. As we develop an ever-increasing array of tools and technologies, we should remember that we are only harnessing what God spoke into His created order from the beginning. This should humble us, and it should also inspire us to use them all in His service.

²⁹ 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; ³⁰ and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food”; and it was so.

³¹ God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

During the first five days of creation, we hear a recurring refrain: God saw that what He made was good. Now, having finished His work of creation, He sees that it was “very good.” This goodness includes its usefulness to us, and in this we see the true glory and goodness of God. The miracle is not just in how He designed us and the world we live in; it’s in the correspondence between the two. God fashioned the heavens and the earth as a habitat for us, and in this miraculous world we live in, we see His great glory and His overwhelming goodness to us.

In the verses to come, we will learn why it was necessary for God to subject our world to its present fallen condition. However, not even this can keep us from seeing His glory and goodness in

everything He created, and this only moves us to say, with King David in Ps. 103:22:

*Bless the LORD, all His works
in all places of His dominion.*

Bless the LORD, O my soul!