

Genesis week 6  
Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:6-8; 15-25  
In His Image - Introduction

Have you ever been in a dark field at night and looked up at the stars and felt really small? Maybe you even felt insignificant? Perhaps you pondered your place in the universe and thought about God and the meaning of it all, or the mystery of it all.

**PSALM 8 gives us what we might call the “WHO AM I” moment...**

In PSALM 8 we get a question that is put in the context of the grandeur of God’s created world. In light of cosmic reality of all that God has made – the moon and the stars – he asks the question, “**What is Man that Thou are mindful of him?**”

I remember doing that as a freshman in college. I’d grown up in church, but I realized that I was lost and in trouble with life. It was around that time that I started reading the Gospel of John to find out more about this person, Jesus.

IS THAT YOU? You’ve been around church all your life, but you’ve never really looked into Jesus for yourself.

**The biblical account and doctrine of Creation is fundamental for answering the “who am I”: question.**

TRUE CONFESSION:

I know this series has spent more time on ‘creation’ than some might want, but honestly, I’m learning so much that it’s hard to just move on. I’ve never taught through Genesis, and I am struck by the depth of significance of these opening chapters.

So, I beg your indulgence as we move forward.

We’re not on a timeline so I’m appreciating the insights as I spend time studying the narrative. I am also struck by how many of the themes of Chapters 1-3 resonate with what is going on in our society today. In my 67 years and 49 years as a believer, I’ve never seen a greater need for a return to Creation principles.

I mentioned early in this series that the opening of Genesis, “In the beginning God created...” brings the biblical account into a head on collision with man-centered culture and the spirit of the age.

Perhaps you can think of ways in which this plays out in scripture or in our world today.

As we move into a different section of Gen 1-2 we need to get a big picture of what is going on in the world as it relates to the created order. In chapters 1-2, God saw what he had made and said, “It is good.” By the time we get to chapter 6:5, only 86 verses later, we see **that 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.**

In Gen 6, the collision between God’s created order and the man-centered spirit of the age was in full view. It led God to start over with Noah and his family, but the impact of the Fall into sin continued.

This collision between God’s order and man’s rebellion is typically seen through social, political, philosophical cultural, scientific, artistic, musical, educational, and religious ideologies. As Colossians 2 points out, the “philosophies and empty deception, according to traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world” are at work.

In Ephesians 6, Paul that we battle not against flesh and blood, but against the schemes of the devil and the rulers, powers, the world forces of darkness, and the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly

places.

Where does this battle manifest itself?

In the social and cultural affairs of this world. In the political, educational, financial, and moral policies and programs instituted by nations.

From the silence of Adam in Gen 3 to brother killing brother in Gen 4, to the countless episodes of deceit, immorality, murder, and idolatry seen in the pages of scripture to the same things seen in today's headlines, we see the impact of sin and the world forces of darkness unfolding on the world stage, and on the stages of our own lives.

Because of what happened in Chapter 3 – the temptation by Satan and fall into sin- humanity set off on a path questioning, doubting, ignoring, and rebelling against God.

One of the schemes of the evil one is to build a culture based on lies. Satan is the father of lies and the original agent of misinformation. He works to reverse the truths and principles that were part of God's created order. Where we see God's order, Satan will offer a counterfeit substitute or an exchange. As Paul puts it in **Romans 1**,

**21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.**

**24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

Note the crucial exchanges:

v. 22-23 Exchanging God for the creature or for creation itself – earth worship and pantheism – “all is God”

v. 24, 27 The natural biblical sexuality with the potential to “be fruitful and multiply” is exchanged for unnatural sexual impurity with no potential to be fruitful and multiply.

v. 25 The exchange of the truth of God for a lie. (‘there is no truth’)

As we move forward, we'll look at some of those counterfeits as they relate to the original Creation design of male and female in the image of God.

One thing to note is that there is no middle ground between the God designed creational order and the man-made order of our day..

If we don't recognize that, then we are putting ourselves and future generations at risk.

First I'll mention a few areas for consideration.

SATAN'S COUNTERFEITS or Exchanges will play themselves out in real time and space in human relationships and institutions. In the worst-case scenario, these counterfeits or exchanges become codified in the law of a nation or a state. And we have seen that happen in my lifetime. If not codified in actual law, the counterfeit views may still become the societal norm.

The foundational counterfeit is to question the authority of God by substituting human autonomy. As the serpent said in Gen 3, “Indeed, has God said...?”

Another form of this is seen in Judges, i.e. “Every man does that what is right in his own eyes.”

**What happens when human autonomy follows deceptive schemes and seeks to rule:**

**There is NO Creation but random chance -a naturalistic evolutionary ideology arises where even 'science' takes on the earmarks of religious devotion.**

**Men and women are not in the image of God, but are just advanced cell with no more inherent worth**

than a slug. The fundamental question, “Who am I?” becomes a source of angst and emotional turmoil.

Not good to be alone gives way to the rulers of this world seeking to isolate us and break down 2<sup>nd</sup> levels of relationships such as church and civic/social organizations.

The creational marriage of one man and one woman gives way to Non- traditional ‘marriage’ –

Be fruitful and multiply is undercut by a mindset that people are the problem

The male- female binary distinction is seen as bad and harmful.

Human autonomy is determining good and evil

The distorted Rainbow -

THAT WAS A LONG INTRODUCTION, so let’s look at a a portion of Gen 1-2

25 God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

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. 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.”

... 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...

2:6 But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. 7 Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. 8 The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

2:15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” 19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones,

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man.”

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

#### Counterfeit #1

There is NO Creation but random chance -a naturalistic evolutionary ideology arises where even ‘science’ takes on the earmarks of religious devotion.

If you come to a church and the sermon series is on Themes in Genesis, then you are expecting to hear some sort of religious spin on the issues of Creation and the nature of God and man.

If you go to a meeting of evolutionary biologists, you may not expect to hear some sort of religious spin on the issues of creation and the nature of man, BUT that is what you will hear. Their position is also an article of faith that they defend with a sort of religious conviction.

In a June 2022 article of the Guardian seeks to explain a debate going on related to the viewpoints on evolutionary theory.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2022/jun/28/do-we-need-a-new-theory-of-evolution>

...”the basic story of evolution, as recounted in countless textbooks and pop-science bestsellers... according to a growing number of scientists, is that it is absurdly crude and misleading.”

The Guardian article points out that “These disputes over evolution had the weight of a theological schism. At stake were the forces governing all creation

In 1973 a BBC presenter was distraught at a non-Darwinian view of evolution.

“If this were so, evolution would have hardly any meaning, and would not be going anywhere in particular,” he said. “This is not simply a quibble among specialists. To a man looking for the meaning of his existence, evolution by natural selection makes sense.”

Where once Christians had complained that Darwin’s theory made life meaningless, now Darwinists levelled the same complaint at scientists who contradicted Darwin.

Friends, that is the language of religious or moral conviction. There is a fervor and devotion to theories that convey meaning that goes beyond a commitment to the Scientific Method. At its origin, science was built around the Scientific Method, not a set of beliefs.

The vocabulary of meaning in life is NOT in the realm of science, but of religion.

If science could prove the naturalist theory of the universe, that “proof” would have nothing to say about the meaning or purpose of life. Meaning and purpose are quite the opposites of a random big bang or a cosmic accident.

### Counterfeit #2

Men and women are not in the image of God but are just advanced cells with no more inherent worth than a slug.

This brings into play the fundamental question, “Who am I?”

This question now becomes a source of angst and emotional turmoil.

We were created for meaning, purpose, and dignity as image bearers.

In PSALM 8 we get a question that is put in the context of the grandeur of God’s created world. In light of cosmic reality of all that God has made – the moon and the stars – he asks the question, “What is Man that Thou are mindful of him?”

The answer is that we are the only created beings who are in the image or likeness of God.

Walter Kaiser...

In the context of the ANE it was a radical concept that both, male and female, shared equally in the highest gift given to any of the orders of creation: the image of God. Male and female shared alike, and both were fully equal as God gave this exclusive and highest mark yet set on anything in creation.

A deeper understanding of this idea would be developed later in New Testament terms as we see the definitional content of this image become clearer (e.g., the “image of God” will include “knowledge,” Col 3:10; and “righteousness and holiness,” Eph 4:24).

In Genesis 1-2 God had created a paradise – a glorious manifestation of a glorious Creator, but it needed more than rocks, rivers, birds, fish, and animals.

This great temple of creation needed worshippers who could reign, reproduce, and reflect the glory and image of God in the world.

Friends, that's you and me and all other human beings, even those we don't like.

And as we consider others, especially believers, C.S. Lewis notes that ... "it is a serious thing to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting (or *offensive*) person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship," – The Weight of Glory

<https://aleteia.org/2018/03/14/c-s-lewis-tells-you-how-to-see-others/>

For TODAY, let us remember that we have the unique privilege of being made in the image of God with the capacity to know Him. That should give us something to think about.

EX: On May 22, 1974 I finished a phone conversation with a girl I was interested in. We had been discussing spiritual things and the key topic was, "Can we know God in a personal way?". She didn't think we could. I did think we could, but I didn't really know what that meant. I'd been reading the gospel of John and was intrigued by Jesus. I hung up the phone with that question running through my mind and as I got to the room I shared with my twin brother I saw a little gold booklet on his desk. It was the "Four Spiritual Laws". I read through it and the answer to the question became clear.  
WE CAN KNOW God THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

We were created to know God, and Jesus is the way to the Father.

We are image bearers, but Jesus is **THE visible image of the invisible God. The fullness of God dwells in Him in bodily form.**

"Be all that you can be..." was a recruiting slogan for the Army.

It really applies to US when we understand our calling as those created in the image of God.

Think about that.

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