

ORIGINS

"THE BEGINNING OF HUMANITY" GENESIS 1:26-2:1

This Week's Core Competency

Personal God – I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 13:14 *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

The nature of God and the nature of humanity are inextricably linked. The fact that God is a personal being and no mere impersonal force is implied by a number of passing remarks made regarding him in Genesis 1:26-31. According to verse 26, "God said, 'Let us make man in *our* image, in our likeness . . .'" Apart from the personal pronouns used, *divine deliberation* and *advance planning* on God's part indicate that the Creator is a personal being. What's more, they indicate that the making of man stands at the pinnacle of his creation. One commentator writes, "Only in the case of man, because of his special importance, does Scripture allude to the Divine thought preceding the act of creation" (U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, part 1, *From Adam to Noah*, 55). And another explains, "The crowning point of creation is human life. Like the animals, humans were formed from the ground, given provision of God, and blessed with fruitfulness. But humans are far

Without God, 'adam knows neither his or her identity nor his or her rightful place in the scheme of things.

— Bruce K. Waltke

more than animals. The text shows that human life was set apart in relation to God by the divine plan ('let us make man'), by the divine pattern ('as our image'), and by the divine purpose ('let him have dominion')" (Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 112).

Divine deliberation and advance planning imply that the Creator is a personal being, but that's not all. The fact that God addressed mankind directly indicates the same thing. According to verse 28, "God blessed them and *said to them*, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'" One commentator writes, "God's blessing on mankind is like that pronounced on the animals in v 22. Like the animals man is to 'be fruitful and multiply.' But whereas v 22 simply gives a command, this verse adds 'and God said to them,' thus drawing attention to the personal relationship between God and man" (Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, *Genesis 1-15*, 33).

This personal relationship between God and mankind is evident following the fall. According to Genesis 3:8, "The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?'" The fact that Adam recognized the sound of God's presence suggests that this was neither the first nor the only time the LORD had visited. One commentator speculates that God likely visited regularly. "The description of Eden with its trees,

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rivers, gold, and so on emphasized God's presence there. Therefore it seems likely that it was not unusual for him to be heard walking in the garden 'in the breeze of the day,' i.e., in the afternoon when cool breezes sprang up and the sun is not so scorching. *Maybe a daily chat between the Almighty and his creatures was customary*" (76 italics added). The ability of Adam and Eve to have a relationship to God and to enjoy daily fellowship with him indicates clearly that he is a person—one who is involved in and cares about the daily lives of the ones he created.

How marvelous is that! Consider the words of the psalmist:

*When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?* (Ps 8:3, 4)

Taken together, the fact that God is a personal being, and the fact that mankind is created in his image and likeness opens the door to human beings enjoying personal fellowship with him through their Savior, Jesus Christ.

For Discussion

How we understand ourselves dictates how we behave. Talk about how your understanding of God affects your understanding of yourself and what difference it makes.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Genesis 1:26-2:1

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

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

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

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

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "us" in v. 26.
- * Underline "image," and "likeness" in v. 26.
- * Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v. 26.
- * Circle "they" in v. 26, and "them" in vv. 27, 28.
- * Underline "rule" in vv. 26, 28 and "subdue" in v. 28.
- * Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 27.
- * Highlight v. 28.
- * Box "then" indicating *temporal sequence* in v. 29.
- * Bracket "seed-bearing plant" and "tree that has fruit with seed in it" in v. 29.
- * Bracket "green plant" in v. 30.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What sets the creation of human beings apart from the creation of animals in previous verses?
2. If God created mankind in his "image," does that mean human beings look like God? Explain.
3. One writer says that God's "image" involves both what human beings *are* and what they *are to do*. What do you think he means by that?
4. In verse 26 God mandated that we humans "rule over" all the earth (cf. v. 28). What do you think that entails?
5. What practical value can such a broad mandate have for you personally?
6. God *speaks* to the man and woman in verse 28. What does that suggest to you about God?
7. What does it suggest to you about them?
8. Read Psalm 8:5, 6. How does it add to the sense of Genesis 1:26, 28?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about the implications of Genesis 1:27 for any one of the following: social justice, the environment, racism, or work.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. It describes where the world as we know it came from, where we came from, and where sin came from. Having said that, it's not surprising that it would document where we came from and where sin came from because the book as a whole is about God's solution to humanity's sin problem.

The book has two parts. The first part, chapters 1-11, is about humanity's *problem*—our sin problem. The second part, chapters 12-50, is about God's solution to humanity's sin problem. Remember what God promised Abram? "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and *all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*" (12:3). This promise was fulfilled in God's only Son, Jesus, who was a descendant of Abraham. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

Neither is it surprising that the book would document God's *purpose* for human beings (1:26), for in connection with telling us where we came from, it tells us how sin frustrated our ability to achieve God's original purpose for us. Genesis 1:26 and 1:28 are key verses that are fundamental to our *identity* as humans and our *purpose* for being. The first one tells us that we are created in God's *image* and *likeness*. While the meaning of these terms is debated, practically everyone agrees that they do not refer to physical appearance. God is spirit; he is incorporeal, which means that he does not have a physical body. Instead, they must refer to something else, perhaps what we *are* and what we *are to do*. One writer puts it this way: "Man[kind] as . . . created was to *mirror* God and to *represent* God" (Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 67).

On one hand that means while God does not have a physical body, our physical bodies do mirror God's capabilities. Consider the psalmist's rhetorical questions: "Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see?" (Ps 94:9). The implied answer is: "Of course, he does." One writer explains, "When we look into a mirror, we see a certain reflection of God: eyes to see, ears to hear, a mouth to communicate. The biblical mirror of God validates this inference by using such anthropomorphisms (i.e., having the form of '*adam*') as 'the eyes of God' and 'the ears of God.' Yet God is spirit,

not corporeal, and so in his substance he differs from us. In sum, our human structure faithfully and adequately shows that God, though spirit, sees the needy and hears the cry of the suffering" (Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 216, 17). It also means that as persons we human beings mirror the fact that God is a person, for like him we have intellect, sensibility, and volition, as well as a sense of a moral law and a sense of self-identity. "Our ability to make decisions according to our intellect and sensibilities and to execute them reflects God's person as seen in the pattern of creation that finds its center in his commands" (217ff.).

On the other hand that means while God is sovereign, we were made in God's image to *represent* him. God created human beings to be his vice-regents and commissioned them to rule over all the earth and subdue it. Some call God's command to do this the *creation mandate* or *cultural mandate*. One writer describes it this way: "Theologians refer to the command to subdue the earth and to have dominion over it as the cultural mandate (our blessing and responsibility to develop culture under the lordship of Christ). All human beings are—by nature in their reproducing of themselves and in the shape of what they are—culture makers. The role of Adam and Eve is inescapable. Before the Fall, Adam named all the animals and composed a poem for his wife. After the Fall, Cain and his descendants began the arts (music, poetry) and science; they became cattlemen, musicians, tool producers, city builders. University researchers develop civilization by their jargon as their doctoral dissertations exhibit, and authorized pedagogues teach the new speech to the next generation and thereby shape our understanding of reality. This issue is not whether human beings will develop culture; the only issue is what kind? Will it be godly or ungodly?" (220). And so, as his representatives, we are commissioned to care for the environment, develop its resources, its potential and our own to the glory of God. As we pursue God's purpose for us, acknowledging the value of what we do in response to his mandate, we affirm that our lives are meaningful not meaningless.

Before you conclude that all the above amounts to no more than irrelevant theological claptrap, keep in mind that what we believe dictates how we behave. We believe God is a personal being who

has made us personal beings so we might have a relationship to him. What's more, he has created us in his image and likeness to mirror him and represent him. Our world-view values such as the sanctity of human life, the dignity and worth of

the individual, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the significance of art and music, the value of education and research, the worth of our work, and our sense of social justice are all rooted in the *Imago Dei*.

The Message of the Passage

God made mankind in his image to be his vice-regents in order to serve as stewards of his creation and to develop human culture to its full potential.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 26 **Let us** "Only in the case of man, because of his special importance, does Scripture allude to the Divine thought preceding the act of creation" (U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, part 1, From Adam to Noah, 55). "These plurals do not explicitly refer to the triunity of the Godhead but do allow for that doctrine's development through the process of progressive revelation" (Ross, 112). *The NIV Study Bible* assumes that God is addressing his heavenly court. "God speaks as the Creator-King, announcing his crowning work to the members of his heavenly court (see 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8; see also 1Ki 22:19-23)" (note on Ge 1:26). As one commentator explains: "'Let us create man' should therefore be regarded as a divine announcement to the heavenly court, drawing the angelic host's attention to the master stroke of creation, man. As Job 38:4, 7 puts it: 'When I laid the foundation of the earth . . . all the sons of God shouted for joy' (cf. Luke 2:13-14)" (Wenham, 28; see also Waltke, 213).

v. 26 **mankind** Cf., "man" (NIV 1984; ESV; NKJV); "humankind" (NET, NRSV); "human beings" (NLT, GNT).

v. 26 **image** Heb. [*tselem*]. "Of its 17 occurrences, 10 refer to various types of physical image, e.g., models of tumors (1 Sam 6:5); pictures of men (Ezek 16:17); or idols (Num 33:52); and two passages in the Psalms liken man's existence to an image of shadow (Ps 39:7 [*sic*; v. 6]; 73:20). The other five occurrences are in Gen 1:26, 27; 5:3; 9:6" (29). But in Genesis "it does not signify a physical representation of corporeality, for God is a spirit" (Ross, 112). In other words, "the image" isn't physical because God is spirit and because humans are both material (body) and immaterial (soul). Therefore, "the image" must define humanity as a psychosomatic unity—a unity of soul and body (see Waltke, 215-19). "The image of God must characterize man's whole being, not simply his mind or soul on the one hand or his body on the other" (Wenham, 30).

v. 26 **likeness** The two terms, "image" and "likeness," appear to be used interchangeably in Genesis 5:3, which suggests that the distinctions between them are not particularly significant. In fact, the term "likeness" may simply be added to "indicate the precise nuance of 'image' in this context" (Wenham, 30). Taken together the two terms refer "to both humanity's being and function. It involves both what 'adam is and what the man and woman do" (Waltke, 219).

v. 27 **so that** Cf., "and let them" (NIV 1984, ESV, NRSV); "so they may" (NET).

v. 27 **male and female** "Each individual, whether male or female, is in the image of God, but humanity cannot bear its image to the next generation apart from the contribution of the male and the female. The text bears witness to the equal dignity of the man and the woman as God's vice-regents to subdue the earth and to rule the creation. Neither the male nor the female on their own can fulfill this mandate; they depend on each other, certainly to reproduce and probably in connection with complementary physical and psychological strengths. Neither sex is ontologically (i.e., in their essential being) superior to the other" (Waltke, 221). "Moses doubtless intends to imply the equality of the sexes, for both male and female display the glory of God's image with equal brilliance . . . To sum up: Man was created as royalty in God's world, male and female alike bearing the divine glory equally" (Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "Male and Female Equality and Male Headship," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 97).

v. 28 **subdue, rule** The divine image makes man God's vice-regent on earth—here enjoined to rule all creatures in earth's three cosmic sphere of heaven, land, and sea. "God's purpose in creating man was that he should rule over the animal world (v. 26). Here this injunction is repeated and defined more precisely . . . Because man is created in God's image, he is king over nature. He rules the world on God's behalf. This is of course no license for the unbridled exploitation and subjugation of nature. Ancient oriental kings were expected to be devoted to the welfare of their subjects, especially the poorest and weakest members of society (Ps 72:12-14). By upholding divine principles of law and justice, rulers promoted peace and prosperity for all their subjects. Similarly, mankind is here commissioned to rule nature as a benevolent king, acting as God's representative over them and therefore treating them in the same way as God who created them" (Wenham, 33).

v. 29 **food** Genesis 1 doesn't explicitly forbid the eating of meat, but some think a prohibition "is clearly to be inferred" (Cassuto, 58). Others suggest that meat eating is "envisaged from the time of the fall" but only explicitly permitted after the flood (cf., Ge 9:3) (Wenham, 34).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Here's a fun summertime game to play with your home group or other families. Go on a photo scavenger hunt. Divide up into teams. Mixing up families will add to the fun. Make a list of ten photos that each team must take (ex. with a fast food worker, at a park). Make sure there is a person in each photo. Set an ending time when all teams must return home. Give points for each photo taken and give extra points to the first team back with all ten photos. Have fun going through each other's pictures and seeing who is in them. Ask kids if these pictures are actual people or images of people. Use this game to start a discussion with your children about us being created in the image of God. We are not God, but we are His image bearers. In what ways do we bear His image? We are creative because God is the Creator. We are spiritual because God is Spirit. We communicate, are relational, and intelligent all because those are characteristics of our great God. We are favored above all other creation because God desires a relationship with us. So much so, that he willingly gave His only Son to make it possible. Spend some time with your family thanking God for creating and wanting us. Then, take a group photo to remember the day!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Ge 1:26-2:1

1. In whose image did God create man?
2. What was Adam's relationship to the animals?
3. What did God provide for Adam and Eve to eat?

What Do You Think

1. What evidence do you see in Genesis 1:27 that people were God's favorite creation?
2. How does it make you feel to know that you were created in God's image?

What R U Going To Do

Gather a piece of paper and some colored pencils. Find a mirror in your house and look at your image. Carefully observe how you look and then draw a picture of yourself. Bring it to church for extra tokens.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Personal God - I believe God cares about everything in my life.

Memory Verse

Psalm 100:2 - *Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.