

GENESIS 1:26-31 (A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS)

I like to come up with little quips to post on Facebook every day. A couple weeks ago, I posted this – “In today’s living world, there were over 7 billion chances to prove evolution in humans; all failed. Add in animals and you’re in the trillions. Epic fail.” There is **nothing** in the archeological record to substantiate even the slightest hint of evolution occurring anywhere in any form of life.

The best the record shows is changes within species to adapt to current environmental conditions. Some people call that “micro-evolution” but even that is an erroneous term; “adaptation” would be much better. A good example of this would be the size of people living in Japan. When my dad lived there in the 50s, he was a head taller than anyone on the bus with him. When I was there in the 80s, I was taller than all the old people, but the younger ones were no different than young people in America.

All of this was the result of better diet. By the time I got there McDonalds had moved in and they were all over the place. The rice of the previous generations limited their size but the Big Mac changed all that and so the people adapted accordingly. But there has never been evolutionary development of any kind.

If evolution were true, out of the trillions of life forms that come and go with each generation, we would see not a few, but thousands of developments in every generation. But none have occurred... not one. At the top of the ladder of species is and always has been, man. And every new baby’s smile is one more nail in evolution’s already well-nailed coffin. In the end, a faulty premise equals a faulty conclusion.

The order of the creation is as it was because it is the way God ordained it to be. On the second half of the sixth day of creation, God created man. Since then, some people have been born as dummies and some have been born as geniuses, but none have developed according to the evolutionary model. Unusual change does occur though in certain circumstances –

The movie The Rain Man was based on a real person named Kim Peek. What he can do is truly astounding. He's read about over 12,000 books and remembers everything in them. He's known as "Kimputer" because of this. He actually reads two pages at once - his left eye reads the left page, and his right eye reads the right page.

It takes him about 3 seconds to read through two pages and he remembers everything on them. He can recall facts and trivia of 15 major subject areas from history to geography and sports. If you tell him any date in history, he can tell you what day of the week it was and he also remembers every piece of music he's ever heard.

Another savant, Daniel Tammet, is one of the world's only highly functioning autistic savants. He has exceptional mathematical and language abilities. He first became famous when he recited Pi from memory to 22,514 decimal places. Numbers are special to him because he has a rare form of synesthesia where he actually sees numbers as having their own unique shapes, color, texture and feel.

He can "see" the result of a mathematical calculation, and he can "sense" whether a number is prime. He's even drawn what pi looks like – a rolling landscape full of different shapes and colors. He speaks 11 languages, one of which is Icelandic.

In 2007, a documentary challenged him to learn the language in a week. Seven days later, he was successfully interviewed on Icelandic television in Icelandic. And it is quite possibly the most complicated language on earth and one which many native speakers find too difficult to master.

Different savants have different gifts – sculpture, mapping, painting, music, mathematical calculations, learning languages, etc... Savants usually acquire their ability after having an illness or receiving a blow to the head. In other words, these abilities were brought out of what already existed in their minds.

This means that any person potentially has these same abilities – all of them. But we are hindered by the limitations that are placed on us – like a

transmission in a car. If we were to remove the limitation, or “switch to the proper gear” then we would be able to access the same level of ability.

Introduction: As we’ve seen over the past 25 verses of Genesis, God created from the simplest to the most complex beings in order. First He created the heavens and the earth. After this, He created light, then a firmament, and then He divided the waters from the land. After this, He created the grass, herbs, and trees and then the great lights in the heavens.

Then He made the sea creatures and the birds, and after that the living creatures on the land – “cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth.” After all of this marvelous beauty, order, and complexity, God had one more thing to create.

Everything else was prepared for the arrival of this final participant in the great unfolding drama of the universe in which we live.

Text Verse: When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. Psalm 8:3-5

May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Crown of Creation

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.”

God’s final part of the created order was man. Man is the most complex and sophisticated organism in the universe and even more, man bears God’s image. Here, in the first chapter of the Bible we see another aspect of

God that reveals His nature. The account says, “Let **Us** make man in **Our** Image, according to **Our** likeness...”

Everything in creation resembles the Creator in a limited way, but the Bible proclaims that man is created in God’s image. What does it specifically mean to be created in God’s image? Let’s review a few ways that we, as God’s image-bearer, reflect Him –

Mentally - We have mental powers to deduce things, to search things out, and to act rationally. We have reason and we have free will. This resembles God’s intellect and anytime we use our mental capacities in a constructive way to invent, write, paint, enjoy, calculate, etc. we reflect God in this way.

Morally – We have a sense of righteousness, justice, mercy, truthfulness, etc. and we act on these because they came from God in whose image we were created. In other words, these moral tenets aren’t arbitrary.

Instead when we act in a moral way, we acknowledge that we were created in God’s image and He is the ultimate expression of the morality we display, even if we don’t always make our moral decisions correctly. Paul reminds us of this in Romans chapter 1 when he speaks of the wrath of God which is directed at us for our incorrect moral thoughts and actions.

When we exercise our morals in a positive way, we reflect right morals instilled in us by our morally perfect God. Opposing abortion reflects God’s image because it protects life created by Him. When we steal, we move away from God’s image which is uprightness and justice.

When societies or people write just laws, punish evil, and promote proper behavior, we confirm that a higher standard exists that reflects God’s image. When we use our talents in a way that brings Him honor, we reflect His image more perfectly.

Socially – we were created for fellowship by the God who understands fellowship. Remember what it said in the verse we’re looking at – “Let **Us** make man in **Our** Image, according to **Our** likeness...” According to the Bible, there is only one God. But the Bible explains, even in the Old

Testament, that within God, there is a Godhead – three Persons in One essence. These three exist in eternal harmony and love. The term “Us” in this verse confirms this concept and also confirms God’s social nature.

When God created man He did it in order to fellowship with him. There was no need to create us, but because of His goodness and His social nature He did. This great act of Genesis 1 demonstrates that He is a Being who cherishes fellowship. Our fellowship between each other therefore reflects God’s social qualities. Every time a man marries a woman, or when someone makes a friend, hugs a child, or attends church, he demonstrates that part of God’s image in his life.

Not only are we created in God’s image, but God said “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.”

God has given man dominion over the other creatures of the earth. Although these creatures are wonderfully made and are to be cared for by man, they **are not** on the same level as man. Unfortunately, people have taken the care of animals to an extreme never intended by God. Activist organizations like PETA and even the UN are looking for animals to be given the same rights as humans and are thus overturning what God decreed in the creation of man.

We as the caretakers of God’s world have been given the right and the responsibility to manage the animals of the earth. Even in the Bible during the times of Israel’s judges, God acknowledged that animals needed to be kept in check so as not to overrun the people dwelling in the land –

Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, *is* among you. And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become *too* numerous for you. Deuteronomy 7:20-22

In Genesis as well as elsewhere in the Bible, an animal that takes a man's life is to be destroyed because it has killed God's image bearer. And the same is true with man. If a man intentionally kills another man, his life is to be taken because he has killed a person created in God's image.

Unfortunately, like PETA with animals, many liberal thinking people cry out against the execution of criminals who commit capital crimes, but the Bible is perfectly clear that the bloodshed of a person can only be atoned for by the blood of the person who committed the murder. We reject these laws at our own peril because they stem **not** from human governmental laws, but from God's eternal laws based on His image.

Here's some of marvelous facts about our construction, which God did on the six day of creation. They show how beautifully we have been sculpted –

1. The stomach's digestive acids are strong enough to dissolve zinc. Fortunately for us though, the cells in the stomach lining renew so quickly that the acids don't have time to dissolve it.
2. The lungs contain over 300,000 million capillaries, or tiny blood vessels. If they were laid end to end, they would stretch 1500 miles.
3. Human bone is as strong as granite in supporting weight. A block of bone the size of a matchbox can support 9 tons. Believe it or not that's four times as much as concrete can support.
4. The largest organ in the body is the skin. In an adult man it covers about 20sq ft. The skin constantly flakes away and in a lifetime each person sheds around 40 lbs of skin.
5. The average person in America eats 50 tons of food and drinks about 11,000 gallons of liquid during his lifetime.
6. Each kidney contains 1 million individual filters. They filter an average of around 2.2 pints of blood per minute, and expel about 2.5 pints of urine a day.

7. The focusing muscles of the eyes move around 100,000 times a day. To give your leg muscles the same workout, you would need to walk 50 miles every day.

8. In 30 minutes, the average body gives off enough combined heat to bring a half gallon of water to boil and the majority of pores are on the head... now you know why some people are so hot-headed...

9. A single human blood cell takes only 60 seconds to make a complete circuit of the body.

10. A foreskin, the size of a postage stamp, from circumcised babies takes 21 days to grow skin that can cover a vast area and is used in treating burn patients. Dr. James McGuire, head of wound management at the Foot and Ankle Institute at Temple University said, "In some cases, we can get four football fields of skin out of one baby foreskin. If taken care of, skin can grow and grow."

12. The skin on the palm side of the hand and fingers is unique for several reasons:

It has no hair.

It contains fingerprints completely unique to the individual.

This skin will normally have no pigmentation and no ability to tan.

It's tough and durable, yet sensitive and it's anchored down to the bones beneath it through an intermediate layer of fascia. This arrangement keeps the skin of the palm from sliding around like a rubber glove when we use our hands to grip and twist.

We could go on all day with amazing facts about the complexity of the human body which is a form created by an infinitely intelligent Being who understood not only how we would end up working – such as being able to see, smell, taste, talk, etc., but giving us things to excite those abilities, such as flowers, smiles, cold showers on hot days and hot showers on cold days.

He's given us crickets and birds to delight our morning hours, and every day he paints a new sunrise and a new sunset into the skies for our enjoyment.

We can appreciate all of this and so much more because of the way He formed us. As King David so wisely said –

For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well. Psalm 139:13, 14

In our text verse for today, the psalmist said, you have made him a little lower than the angels. This seems to put us in a lesser category than the angels, but if you go to Hebrews chapter 1, it says this –

But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:13, 14

Although we are a “little lower than the angels” it is the angels who have the job of ministering to the people who will inherit salvation. Angels were created, but they are spirits, lacking potential. On the other hand, man has potential and it is unlimited in amount and variety. And above all the other potentials that man possesses is the ability to be redeemed.

We live in a fallen state in the world, but God has placed angels in our lives to minister to us when we have come to the point of salvation. From that point on, we can infer that angels are there working in ways we don't even know to guide us in our redemptive walk.

The crown of God's wonderful creation plan,
Is God's image-bearer, known as man,
Angels tend to his needs unaware,
And the domain of earth is under his care,

As special as God formed him to be
Man turned away from the Creator, you see
And so there is a rift between God and man
And this rift is a vast one that we cannot span

But God did the work to reconcile the two
He sent His Son Jesus, all things to renew
And so again we can stand in His glorious light
Because of the Savior who has made all things right

II. Male and Female

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

Although this point ought to be obvious and unnecessary, it seems that in the confused world that we live in people can't figure out even the obvious. God created man as man and God created women as women. In an attempt to deny this, modern thinking has taken almost everything to extremes never intended simply to deny the difference between the sexes.

Despite this, men have qualities that are suited for men and women have qualities that are suited for women. Neither is better than the other, but both fit what God has created for the purposes He created them.

Concerning the brain alone, there are huge differences between us... as if that shouldn't already be obvious.

In relationships, women tend to communicate more effectively than men. They focus on how to create a solution that works for a group, talking through issues, and utilizing non-verbal cues such as tone, emotion, and empathy, whereas men tend to be more task-oriented, less talkative, and more isolated. Imagine that, men... less talkative than women. hmmm

Men have a more difficult time understanding emotions that aren't explicitly verbalized, while women tend to intuit emotions and emotional cues. These differences explain why men and women sometimes have difficulty communicating and why men-to-men friendships look different from friendships among women. Thank goodness for that.

Men normally process better in the left hemisphere of the brain while women tend to process between both hemispheres. This difference

explains why men are usually stronger with left-brain activities and follow a task-oriented perspective while women typically solve problems more creatively.

It seems to me that their creative problem solving techniques are usually best noted when they drive their cars and is the reason why **I choose to drive** when I'm with my wife...

Men normally process language in their dominant hemisphere, but women process it in both hemispheres. I guess this makes sense because it seems to me that women have a lot more to say than men. If they can learn other languages then they can keep talking wherever they travel without interruption.

Women have a thicker parietal region of the brain, which hinders the ability to mentally rotate objects. Research has shown this ability in babies as young as 5 months old and so environmental influences have nothing to do with this ability. So if someone says to a woman she's thick-headed, they may not be far off...

In all honesty though, my daughter is definitely the exception to this rule. She can take a three dimensional puzzle and construct it in her head without ever touching it. Then she can put it together the first time without any effort at all. I, on the other hand, usually can't solve these things even after long periods of time.

As you can see, not only are we physically different, but men and women are mentally different as well. Understanding the differences between men and women is part of understanding our different roles as people, as partners, and as members of the church.

A man is never complete without a woman and a woman is likewise incomplete without a man, but together the two are made to be one. We'll talk about this more when we get into Genesis chapter 2 in a future sermon.

One more note on this point though is that the Bible never diminishes the worth of women, instead it exalts them. However, the Bible does note cultural distinctions between the sexes such as the Jewish culture, the Greek culture, etc. Just because **cultural** distinctions are made in no way means that they are to be universally applied. Only when a verse is prescriptive in nature is it to be applied to men and/or women.

III. What God has Ordained

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.”

Chapter 2 deals more with the personal relationship between a man and a woman and the subject of marriage is better left until then. However, this verse sets the pattern for physical relationships. God told them, “be fruitful and multiply.” What’s implicitly stated here is that sex is meant for the people of the world, but that it has been ordained to be between a man and a woman.

The earth can’t be filled with people engaged in homosexuality. Instead, God created us male and female for the purpose of procreation in order to fill the earth. Anything contrary to this then is a perversion of what God has ordained. Accounts such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are recorded specifically to deal with the issue of homosexuality.

Unfortunately, in order to twist what’s written there, homosexual advocates say that what is implied in the Sodom account is a belligerent and unwelcoming attitude of the people, not homosexuality. If they would simply complete their reading of the Bible, they’d find that the Bible interprets this passage elsewhere –

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual

immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jude -6, -7

The Law of Moses also gives us insights into the matter –

If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them. Leviticus 20:13

Speaking of what is obvious from creation, including interpersonal relationships, Paul says this in the book of Romans –

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. Romans 1:26, 27

Another of God's ordinances that we saw previously is also mentioned in verse 28 when God said that man is to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Man has been given ruling authority over the animals of the earth, both for their care and their control. To elevate animal life to the same level as man is to actually bring dishonor on God because God created man in His image. By claiming that animals are comparable in rights to man is to thus negate the very authority of God's established hierarchy.

As a society, it is right to work **actively** against any attempt to give animals rights beyond the normal care and control that was ordained by God Himself. Likewise, it is right for Christians to oppose any and all attempts to normalize homosexual rights and claims within a society.

Issues such as these don't mean we are uncaring about either animals or those who are caught up in homosexuality. But it does mean that we are to

hold what God has ordained above what man desires when it's contrary to God's natural laws.

In the end, verbal and physical attacks against Christians are only going to increase in the years ahead when we stand against violations of God's ordinances, but choices have to be made and each person has to determine, in advance, what is and what isn't acceptable and then be ready to stand on those principles in the face of harsh criticism and even attack.

IV. It Was Very Good

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.

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.

On the sixth day, God created all of the beasts of the earth and He created man, thus completing His creative effort. These verses then are a reminder of what was available for man to eat. This seems to imply that there was nothing poisonous in the herbs, the grains, or the fruit at that time. Instead everything was edible to all living creatures and this is what you'd expect from the original creation before sin and death entered the world.

After making His pronouncement about the food available for life on earth, God expands on the comment of the previous five days which said, "it was good." Instead, God says, *v'hine, tov meod*. "And indeed, it was very good."

It must have been an immensely splendid and beautiful place before the fall of man. And even after the fall but before the Flood, the world must have been in an exceptionally beautiful and life-accommodating state. It will again be this way in the millennial reign of Christ when God restores much of what was lost so long ago.

Matthew Henry says in his commentary of this portion of Scripture, “The time when this work was concluded: The evening and the morning were the sixth day; so that in six days God made the world. We are not to think **but that God could have made the world in an instant**. He that said, Let there be light, and there was light, could have said, “Let there be a world,” and there would have been a world, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as at the resurrection.”

Mr. Henry is saying that God could have done everything instantly, but he chose to do it in a series and for specific reasons. As we noted last week, God created from the least complex to the most complex which should inspire us to do the same with our own works, ever improving on what we do.

God also did His work in 6 days to show us a good and proper cycle of living; taking one day a week off for rest and relaxation. And also, these six days are representative of a greater picture in redemptive History. God concluded His works on the sixth day and, as we’ll see in the next sermon, rested on the seventh. When we analyze that next week, we’ll look again at the reason for it.

Until then, let’s remember that this world is God’s creation and man was created to dwell in it, to fill it, to subdue it, and to care for it. Let’s contemplate these aspects of God’s plan as we use the water He provides, the food He gives us, and the terrain below our feet as we walk the highways and hills of life.

Everything we see, feel, smell, taste, hear, and sense is a gift of and from God, and each demonstrates His intelligence, wisdom, and love. As the psalmist said, “Bless the Lord, O my soul!”

It was very good said our God
When he gave His creation an approval nod

Man has a home and a place to live
I’ve prepared it all for Him and to Him it I give

I know he'll go his own way
and that in the end
I'll have to save the day

But when he sees the love I show in my own Son
Again, his heart I will have won
After the cry on that cross... it is done

Again it will be perfect and without a flaw
But better than it was before
Because man will stand in humbled awe
Of the work of Jesus who stands at heaven's door

All who pass through will in Him delight
And praise His work of powerful might

For eternity man will live
In the perfect joy that I give
The waters of life free for all who will but receive
The gift of eternal life if you will but believe

v'hine, tov meod. "And indeed, it was very good."