

Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:4

“4 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens, 5 before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For Jehovah God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; 6 but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. 7 And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

"Man is Given Life"

We have been considering the various truths that can be gleaned from the Book of Beginnings regarding our world in which we live. We have considered gardens & rivers, we have considered precious metals and jewels seeing all the richness and creativity of God's Good Creation.

➤ **At the end of my last message I made the point that man is created as the crown jewel of this Creation.**

We see man's creation on Day Six in the first chapter of Genesis which we read this morning and now in Chapter two we see a fuller expansion of this work and all that it means. Listen again to the account of man's creation in chapter one remembering that this is the third time that a specific reference to God creating ex-nilo or out of nothing is made and in the case of man it is mentioned not once but three times...

Genesis 1:26: “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." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 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.”

There we have the summary and in Chapter Two we see many more details: First we have our text in verse seven: 7 “And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

This will be our focus for today, but we also see more detail given in verse 15: “Then Jehovah God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." 18 And Jehovah God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.”

➤ **Here we see man's work which we will consider next week.**

➤ **And finally we see the creation of woman which Lord willing we will study in two weeks...**

“21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; & He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which Jehovah God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones & flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

So Lord willing, over these three weeks we will consider the gifts that God has given to man...

➤ **Life – Work -- & Woman**

After this we will talk about the special trees that God planted in the garden which will be very central to our study of Chapter three. We live on the fallen side of the fall of man found in chapter three. Man's fall into sin impacted his life, his work and his relationship to woman...

➤ **But we must always remember that we are still made in the Image of God and all that this means.**

It is only Christians, who have a proper understanding of these foundational truths, who can comprehend and explain why we see in man both a tremendous potential for good and such a sad potential for evil.

➤ **Without a proper understanding of the Book of Beginnings there is no way to make sense of these two conflicting truths.**

Without God's revelation we must either have a Pollyanna view of man believing he is good by nature & just messed up by his environment... Or you must join in the despair of modern man who says that man is just part of the machine where all is going to end in death and destruction... We can dress such a view up the way that George Lukas did with the Star Wars movies, but we must always remember that Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker followed the same force.

➤ **Again, it is only consistent Christians who can account for both the good and the evil that we see in man & the world around us.**

As we consider how God gave man the gift of life we see clearly that man is NOT part of the machine! Man is made in the image of God, made to relate to the Three Persons of the Trinity, made to relate to His wife as we shall see in a few weeks AND made to relate to other men & women.

Man has a calling and a purpose being called to fill the earth and take dominion. As I have mentioned before this is a calling that did not end with the fall, it is repeated AFTER the flood as part of God's covenant with Noah and again as God makes His covenant with Abraham who was to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. The fall of man greatly impacted his relationship with God, with his fellow man and even with nature as we shall see in Chapter three...

➤ **But man is still made in God's image and thus worthy of redemption or judgment.**

So what do we see here in Genesis about the gift of life? The three great acts of creation that we studied in chapter one related to the creation of time and all the material of the universe in verse one, the creation of living things in verse 21, and finally to the creation of man in verses 26 & 27 which we have read. So God's creative action brought forth the material of the universe, it brought forth all living things: Sea creatures, birds and land animals as well as man; and He made man in His image. In our study of chapter one we considered some of the ways that man is distinguished from the other living creatures...

➤ **His ability to love**

➤ **His ability to reason**

➤ **His ability to rule which should include his ability to be creative.**

So here in chapter two we are given a bit more detail about how God created man: Our text says, "7 And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

I think we are to take from this, that man is something God both made and created: He is made from the existing material as were the other animals on the sixth day, AND he was created in God's image.

There is a great deal of debate about how the nature of man is to be described:

- Is he body and soul...
- Body, soul and spirit...
- Or as the materialists would have to argue just a body?

We reject the last option out of hand and even the materialists cannot live that way! We also know that man is more than a living creature like the other animals and thus many argue for the body, soul and spirit description. I would argue that body and soul is more Biblical if we understand that our body is a living body like the animals and our soul is the eternal soul that God breathed into man.

What we do want to do is to allow the Bible to impact our thinking about such things and since the Apostle Paul references our text in his defense of the resurrection we should consider what he has to say with a bit of context:

I Corinthians 15:36 “But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" **36** Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. **37** And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain. **38** But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.”

[Remember that we saw ‘after its own kind seven times in chapter one of Genesis!]

39 “All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.”

[Here Paul sets man apart from the animals which he divides the same way that God did in Genesis one.]

40 “There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

[Angels and the creatures before God’s throne have a different nature]

41 “There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.”

[Paul again uses other distinctions in nature to make his point]

42 “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. **43** It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. **44** It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. **45** And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. **46** However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. **47** The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. **48** As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.” **49** And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. **50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.”

What Paul says here helps us to make sense of the two resurrections mentioned in the Book of Revelation if we relate them back to creation as Paul does. In the garden man was created from the dust and Paul indicates that he was not yet spiritual as Christ was being one who came from heaven.

Would Adam have become spiritual in the sense that Paul refers to here if he had not fallen into sin?

- I believe he would have by partaking of the Tree of Life which we will discuss in more detail at the end of chapter three.

- **BUT, Adam did fall into sin and thus all men are born corrupted and in need of salvation.**

Those who trust in Jesus for their salvation experience the two resurrections described in Revelation, just as they experience the two births that Jesus explained to Nicodemus. Revelation 20:4 “4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

The second resurrection is where all the living and the dead are brought before the White Throne for judgment. Revelation 20: “12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

It is here at the second resurrection that we who are in Christ will receive our gloried bodies that Paul tries to describe in I Corinthians 15:

- **Paul says it is like trying to tell someone who has never seen a mighty oak tree, what it will look like by showing them only an acorn.**

As I said, we live on this side of the fall so it is just as hard for us to imagine what Adam and Eve were like in their unfallen state as it is to think about what we will be like in our resurrected body where our spirit is confirmed for all eternity.

But Adam fell into sin and Paul says we look to Jesus, the New Adam:

- **It is John who begins his Gospel account by telling us how the Word came from heaven as the Spiritual man...**

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

Jesus came as the spiritual man from heaven bringing true light to the world!

6 “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

[the sad results of the fall!]

“12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Why did Jesus come as a man? To bring life to a fallen race, to be the second Adam who would confirm God's covenant with His people.

- **Jesus came as man to save man because man was made in the image of God!**

Man had fallen into sin and had no way to attain the life that would have been given by the Tree of Life in the Garden of God, but as we shall see in Chapter three, God immediately promised to bring forth the glorious bride for His Son by sending His Son as the Seed of the Woman to crush the head of the serpent.

The hymn that we will be commissioned with today is based on Psalm 8 which is a powerful Psalm that reminds us about the importance of man as one made in God's Image AND why it was important that Jesus come as a man... Picking up at the third verse...

Psalm 8 "3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

[Even in the midst of all the wonders of His grand Creation, God is mindful of man because he is made in His Image. AND God knows that His own Son must come as the Son of Man to save His people from their sins]

5 "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen-- Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. 9 O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!"

- **This Psalm is quoted by the Apostle Paul earlier in the 15th Chapter of I Corinthians and heavily in the Book of Hebrews.**

As Christians we are thankful for the life that God has given man AND we are thankful for the new life He has given us in Christ!

However, as Christians we too should be mindful of man... This is why we stand against the sin of abortion which is a sin against God as it destroys one made in His image.

This is why we must love our neighbor as ourselves, the second Great Commandment...

- **How can we say that we love God under the greatest commandment IF we fail to then love those made in His image.**

This is why we honor the high-calling of motherhood, where the woman not only brings a new life into this world but loves and nurtures that child so they can grow up loving Jesus secure in their eternal salvation.

This is why we respect and appreciate the ability of our fellow man to love, to reason and to rule even in their fallen state. It is often in relation to such actions that we have the opportunity to show them their need for the Savior.

As C.S. Lewis points out, just as a beautiful picture of a garden reminds us of the reality of gardens, so our being made in God's image, even in our fallen state, reminds us of the glories of eternity and the hope of glorified bodies.

I want to close with the powerful passage that in large part brought me to the Lord some 37 years ago...

In Act 17 we find Paul in Athens where he confronts the men of that day with the reality of their having been made in the image of God & thus they should flee sin & see their need of a Savior:

“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Communion Meditation: John 6:48

“[Jesus said] I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”