

Does anyone else (here) love sports...? ... Well... what if you had been thrown into a game without knowing when it started... when it will finish... what the objective of the game is... or what the rules are. ... What would you do? You'd probably ask the other players around you to answer those four questions for you.

What if they responded with many different answers? ... Or what if they simply carried on playing... uninterested in your questions and looking at you oddly for asking them? ... Next... you would look to a coach for help... but what if the coach was standing there... looking at the chaos... and yelling... *"Great job, guys! You're all doing great! Keep going! We've got a first-place trophy waiting for all of you!"*

Finally... you would turn to find the referee or umpire for definitive answers to your questions. ... But what if the players had gotten frustrated with the referee's calls and sent him home?

And now imagine the conversations about the game on the drive home. They would be completely meaningless. It is our knowledge of the start... the finish... the objective... and the rules of a game that provide us with the freedom to play it and to enjoy it in a meaningful way.

Someone might say... that is just plain ridiculous for you to ask us to imagine such a thing. But sadly... I have to say it is not an imaginary thing for a lot of people. It is a reality for a large segment of people in our society today. But it is not just a game. This is life for many who are trying to live without the answers to these four crucial questions:

- Where did I come from?
- Why am I here?
- How should I live?
- Where am I headed?

In a recent national survey (done in 2016)... 18-24-year-olds report that having a clear purpose in life is a big part of being a "real" adult. ... The problem is... most young people don't feel like they've found that sense of purpose. ... More than 86% of young adults say that... making decisions in line with their purpose... makes them an adult. ... But only 43% say they have a clear picture of what they want in life... 36% say their career path aligns with life purpose... and only 30% know why they are here.

Christine B. Whelan, a professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison writes in the conclusion of the study:

*"This [study] isn't good news: Coasting is existing, not thriving. The majority of young adults who say they don't have a clear picture of what they want in life also say they are existing but not thriving, while those with purpose more often say they are thriving."*

Such studies are no surprise... really. Because we live in an increasingly atheistic society that cannot tolerate any consideration of a creation with purpose. ... And it has no sense of the eternal.

But this morning... it becomes clear to us... in our study of Biblical creationism... that God **does** give us a purpose and a role. ... Everyone who hears my voice... was created with functions and purpose. We can do **no greater damage** to humanity... than what our current society has

attempted to do... in robbing us of our purposeful existence. (LISTEN!)  
There is no dignity in being at the top of the evolutionary ladder. ... We can do **no greater damage** to biblical theology... than to compromise God's **purposeful** creation of human beings.

Primarily... what is at issue... as Biblical creationism comes under attack... is not the specifics of evolution versus the specifics of Genesis. Instead... the main issue... is the worldview claim that life is the product of **impersonal forces**... versus the claim that life was **designed** by an **intelligent agent**.

The worst part of evolution's domination of our current culture... is that believers often become silent... or indifferent... about the fact that we are made in God's image... and that God has a purpose for us.

So here is where we will be going this morning... Being made in the image of God confers on us **dignity**... entrusts us with **responsibility**... and implants in us a certain potential... (now get this)... namely... we are given the **capacity** to mirror our Creator.

Our **capacity** to be **godlike**... impacts our view of ourselves... and of what should characterize our lives... as believers. ... So we often set for ourselves standards and rules for how we will live.

(LISTEN!) That's fine... because being above reproach should typify Christians... but it cannot represent the sum total of our faith. ... In the end... our Christianity cannot be defined by a set of rules that we live by. ... Nor can we punch in and punch out by the clock. Being a Christian is not nearly as much about **what** we **do**... as it is about **who** we **are**. ...

(Christianity is about ***being***.) ... **Our aspiration is to be godlike in our character... and in that goal - we find our purpose.**

However... we live in a goal-oriented society that attempts to define everything... reducing it to a list... so that we can assess the achievement of our goals. In a lot of churches... this means that "rules for living" must be set.

But being Christian means more than living according to a set of rules. God tells His people Israel... "*Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy*" (Lev. 19:2). ... Paul encourages the Philippians... "*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 2:5), and admonishes the Ephesians "*to be imitators of God*" (5:1).

Lists like the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12) and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) illustrate some of the outcomes of a life that is more than obeying a set of rules. ... We must aspire to attain the godlikeness that the image of God has made possible in us.

The truths found in our passage today in Genesis... lay the very foundation for all this. So let's get started.

### **Genesis 1:14-19**

We already dealt with these verses somewhat... when we came to the first day's creation (of light)... back in verses 3-5.

Here in Genesis 1:14-18... we are not dealing with the creation of light. Here it is day ***four***... and light was created on day ***one***. ... So what... then is God creating on this fourth day...? ... God is creating and distributing

light upon earth. (Once again)... He is not dealing with light throughout the universe... He is dealing with light on planet earth. Light has already existed since the first day of creation... now we have light rays dispensed and allotted... in an orderly manner - to the earth.

It is important to notice (don't miss this)... that the explained purpose for these lights is for those who are living on earth. The Genesis record is very earth and man centered. God had us in mind.

The human beings that will be placed on the earth must have a way of denoting time. They will be creatures that live in the realm of time passing... rather than as God... Whose realm is the eternal present (knowing the end from the beginning). ... Humans must have the means to denote occurrences... and to remember them... and date them. The entities of light placed in the heavens (allowing the telling of time) are the beginning of the humans' storehouse of knowledge. ' It makes agriculture possible... because they can know when to plant and to harvest. They are able to set times for civil and sacred purposes.

The cycle of the moon established when months began and ended. The stars helped to calculate the solar year and to make periodic adjustments to the calendar to synchronize the lunar calendar with the solar calendar.

The Jews needed to know the times and the seasons... when the Sabbath arrived and ended... when it was a new month... and when it was time to celebrate their annual feasts (Lev. 26).

Before the invention of the clock and the compass... the activities of human life were closely linked to nature's cycles. Navigators depended on the stars to direct them. And God would occasionally use signs in the heavens

to speak to His people on earth. ... (The Magi knew the King of Israel had been born and came to see Him... because of the sign of a star. Before the Lord returns... there will be signs in the heavens.)

This is all man-centered... isn't it...? God was enabling us for something. But notice (quickly) that these verses also limit the importance of the stars. The Hebrew terms for the "sun" (semes)... and "moon" (yareah, lebana) aren't even used. (We see them used elsewhere in Scripture... but Moses carefully avoids their use here.) ... He just calls them "the greater" and "the lesser" light. ... Please remember that Moses grew up in Egypt... and the Israelites had spent 400 years in captivity there... where the sun... moon... and stars were worshipped. ... God was revealing to His people... that the stars were no more than creations who were subject to His purposeful will.

### **Genesis 1:20-23**

Everything created up to this point... in the six days of creation... was a matter of God taking something He had already created... and focusing... rearranging... or reforming it. ... The Hebrew word for "make" is "asa" and it has been the word in use until now. God was overcoming the *tohu va vohu* that verse two mentioned. He is bringing order and purpose from chaos.

But not now... not in the creation of animal life. ... Water and air creatures were to be different... distinctive... and unique — so much so... that a special creative act of God was needed. The "*bara creation*" of God was needed.

The Hebrew word "bara" means the creation of something new... completely new. ... It is the creation of something *out of nothing*. ... No

material... no matter... no substance... nothing whatsoever is used. ... This is the first time the Hebrew word "bara" (create) is used since God created (bara) the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1). ... This is definitely showing that the creation of water and air creatures was different from days 1-4 of creation.

A new element is added to God's work on this day: He not only called His work "good"... but He ***blessed*** the creatures He had made. ... This is the first time the word "*bless*" is used in the Bible.

The verb *barak* has the basic idea of giving a gift... of enriching someone or something in some way. ... When God blessed people (or animals, as here)... it signified his giving them good gifts for their life. ... But the word also includes the sense of enablement as part of the enrichment. The decree to be fruitful comes as the blessing but also includes the ability to be fruitful.

Whenever we see God's blessing (throughout the Bible)... God's blessing means enablement... increase... and success. ... He favors the recipient with many descendants and material prosperity.

Here... God's blessing enabled the creatures to reproduce abundantly... and to enjoy all that He had made for them. God would also bless the first man and woman (Gen. 1:28; 5:2)... the Sabbath Day (2:3)... and Noah and his family (9:2). ... We also see God's blessing when He gave His gracious covenant to Abraham and his descendants (12:1-3). In every case... God enables... increases... and makes successful.

### **Genesis 1:24-25**

Animals were created in three classes.

- 1) Cattle (behemah): the domestic animals; animals that can be tamed and used in the service of man such as cattle, oxen, camels, horses, dogs, sheep, and donkeys.
- 2) Creeping things (remes): the smaller animals that glide along on their bellies or else creep along with small feet. The creepers would include such animals as snakes, worms, ants, and insects.
- 3) Beast of the earth (chayyah haarets): the wild animals, the daring and untamed animals such as lions, bears, wolves, and elephants.

There are more than 800,000 different kinds of insects... 30,000 kinds of fish... 9,000 kinds of birds... 6,000 kinds of reptiles... 3,000 kinds of amphibians... and 5,000 kinds of mammals. ... God is truly a God of variety.

These verses do all that they can to eliminate evolutionary theory. Did you notice how many times the phrase "*after its kind*" is used...? As I mentioned last week (the first time we saw the phrase)... it is used 10 times in Genesis chapter one.

There has not been any crossover or transmutation of species. Up to the present time, the fossil record of the earth has not revealed any crossover or transmutation of one species to another species. The fossil record has indicated development and adaptation among some animals within species, but there has not been any discovery that shows development from one species to another species. In fact, the very opposite is the case. Fossil remains have now been studied for decade after decade with the most scientific technology available, but no crossover of species has ever



been found. There has not even been a gradual development or a slow transition from one species to another.

Will fossil research ever produce such evidence? How can it, when it has been searching for over one hundred years? Significant evidence of crossovers would have certainly been discovered by now. But the missing links and gaps remain. ... The Holy Scripture declares that God made and molded animals "*after their kind.*" ... Each species... each major group... was created to reproduce only *its own kind.*

### **Genesis 1:26-27**

God held a very special conference... (a divine counsel)... to create man. Notice what God said... "*Let us make man...in our image...after our likeness.*" ... This is plural. God is speaking to Christ... (His Son)... and to the Holy Spirit. How do we know this?

First... because Jesus Christ revealed the Trinity to us (John 14:16-17, 26). God the Father... God the Son... and God the Holy Spirit do exist. ... All three exist in perfect unity. They are all of one mind and purpose.

Second... because Scripture reveals that all three Persons of the Godhead were involved in creation (Col. 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-2). ... The Godhead would have certainly discussed the plans and work of creation while they were creating the earth.

Third... because God uses the plural here in Genesis. God says, "Let us make man in our image... after our likeness." God is not telling angels nor any other heavenly creature that they are to work together in creating man.

Angels don't create. God... not heavenly beings... is creating man. Man is the creation of God and of God alone.

Fourth... because God made man in His own image. God did not make man in the image of angels nor of any other heavenly being.

The point is this: God held a very special conference... a divine counsel... to create man. ... Why? ... To show the great dignity and honor of man. Man was given the glorious privilege of being created by *all the Godhead*. God held a great counsel to plan man's creation. Man's creation was to be so special... so climactic — the very crown and glory of creation — that God called a very special conference to discuss the matter.

When the believer really meditates upon this glorious truth... his heart should throb with excitement. God's plan for his creation was so important that it necessitated the fulness of God's presence and love and care. Man is the crowning summit and climax of God's creation. ...Unlike any other creation... we are the image of God.

In what ways are we made in God's image? ... God obviously did not create us exactly like Himself... because God has no physical body. Instead... we are reflections of God's glory. ... We will never be totally like God because He is our supreme Creator. ... But we do have the ability to reflect His character... and oversee the rest of His creation on earth... on His behalf.

Humans share the nature of God... in that we are rational beings who make choices... with a moral nature inherent in us. ... Humans (in God's

image) are moral creatures. ... We act and react in a context of right and wrong... good and evil. ... And we have choice. We can chose good... or we can rebel against that for which they were created.

But man is to be allied to heaven as no other creature on earth is. He is to be related to the Eternal Being Himself. When God created humans... He placed within us the one great and necessary ingredient for true fellowship with Him. ... As creatures 'in his image'... we can fully appreciate Him... unlike any other created being.

We are different than animals. We share the nature of God... in at least five ways that animals don't... #1.) We have the ability to comprehend morality... #2.) can seek after God... #3.) can have fellowship with Him... #4.) can reflect His character... and #5) can act on His behalf to preside over His creation on earth... This is seen in the next verse.

### **Genesis 1:28**

Humanity's dominion over the earth is a hotly debated topic in an environmentally sensitive generation. ... How are we to understand it?

The two words used in this context (subdue and dominion) have rather harsh meanings in other biblical texts. ... The words are used in connection with domination and trampling under foot. For example... the same word 'subdue' is seen in Zechariah to describe a conquering army (Zechariah 9:14).

So... from a simple reading of the text... we might assume that humans are to exploit the earth... and use it for our own advantage. ... Don't feel any outrage when you see photographs of American tourists going over to

Africa... hunting and killing giraffes – just for the fun of it (to get a picture of themselves standing over the dead momma giraffe and her baby.) Genesis 1:28 tells us that we can. We have dominion.

Is that how we are to understand Genesis 1:28...? Many people have. But the mistake that they make when utilizing this interpretation... is to ignore the greater context of creation. We need to continue to read on... into chapter 2... where we encounter a clarifying word from God.

**Genesis 2:15 (ESV)**

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

The words “work it and keep it” means to manage... cultivate... and nurture it... on someone else’s behalf. ... Man is a hired gardener and zoo-keeper.

Now let’s read Genesis 2:15... again followed by the next two verses...

**Genesis 2:15-17 (ESV)**

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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.”*

He is free to ‘subdue,’ but must stay within the framework of being responsible for God’s creation. We are to have dominion... but God laid down a law in forbidding man to eat the forbidden fruit... thus he is reminding us that humans are under the dominion of God.

God has created the cosmos for Himself – not for us... though it is true that He has given us high status (and privilege) in this world of His. ...So... our role in subduing and ruling... must be seen as a function of stewardship...

not of ownership. ... This world is not ours to dispose of as we will... but it has been put under our charge... to manage for its owner (God.) ... That management is not with our own benefit in mind... but with the mindset that this is God's world.

Those who reflect God's character... (being aware that we have His image)... will not selfishly exploit animals and nature. Those who reflect God's character will be balanced environmentalists. They understand from passages like today's that people are given a higher status and worth than plants and animals. The Biblical view rejects biocentrism... which claims that all inhabitants of the earth have equal status (plants... animals... and people.) But we see ourselves as stewards of creation – showing a respect for what belongs to God.

### **Genesis 1:29-30**

God provided food for the animals as well as for humans. After the flood of Noah's day... animal meat also became part of the diet of man and beast. But before Noah's flood... man and beast were all vegetarians.

I don't think that this is a mandate that we should all become vegetarians. Following the flood... God gave permission to eat meat. The timing of God permitting meat consumption... (right after the flood)... suggests to me that there had been some kind of disruption to the nutritional supply that plants had been able to give. It was no longer enough. (If the Greenhouse canopy theory that I mentioned last week was true... this would make sense... During the flood... the water canopy that acted like a greenhouse over the earth... would have fallen.)

### **Genesis 1:31**

This brings us to the end of chapter one. Meditation on the creative act is essential to anyone wishing to understand a right relationship to God... and that He has a purpose for your life.

And there is a purpose for your being here... today. You are meant to answer something... solve something... provide something... lead something... discover something... compose something... write something... say something... translate something... interpret something... sing something... create something... teach something... preach something... bear something... overcome something... and in doing so... you improve the lives of others under the power of God... for the glory of God.

**Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)**

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.