

What is Man?

The Doctrine of Creation and the Foundation of Our Identity

Genesis 1 and Selected Scriptures

© Mike Riccardi

Introduction

Well, last week I preached a sermon on **the nature of truth**—an absolutely fundamental question in any age, really, but especially so in our day, when the very existence of **truth** is under such attack. The concept of truth is fundamental to all rational thought, fundamental to our understanding of and relationship to reality, fundamental to our understanding and practice of morality. And I spoke about our need, as the people of God, in this place, at this time, to be salt and light to the decaying and lost culture around us—our need not to retreat from a depraved and corrupt world, but to boldly confront that world by proclaiming the truth of the Christian worldview in the face of the lies and the absurdity and the chaos that surround us.

And I did mention there is no more pervasive illustration of our culture's descent into absurdity, and its willingness to suppress the truth in unrighteousness, than the transgender movement. And because of that, it's been my desire to spend some time in GraceLife bringing the Word of God to bear on the question of human sexuality. The LGBTQ movement has absolutely hijacked our culture—whether it be in pop-culture entertainment like TV, music, and movies; whether it be the *educational* system, which seeks to normalize sexual perversion in the minds of children as they indoctrinate them and, really, groom them for sexual deviancy; whether it be the *medical* system, which pressures adults and even children to mutilate themselves by life-altering surgeries, because of their gender dysphoria; or whether it be the legal system, which can be leveraged to bankrupt those who dare to dissent from this new sexual orthodoxy. If we're going to have any hope of being salt and light in this culture, we have to be equipped to confront this perverse sexual credo with a biblical doctrine of sexuality—to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and His right, as King of the universe, to define good and evil in His world. And, as Phil said recently in one of our Q&As, this is likely to be the precipitating cause of persecution of the church in the coming years. That legal system *will* be leveraged against you and me, if we refuse to bow the knee to calling evil good and good evil. And so we need to be equipped to give the Bible's answers to the culture's perversions. And we need to be convinced that those answers need to be given, or we will compromise under the pressure of persecution.

But as I began preparing to preach on biblical sexuality, I realized very quickly how central the notion of **identity** has become in this discussion. Our culture has actually conflated sexuality with identity. According to them, our sexual appetites define us. We *are* what we desire. And if we ever act out of accord with our basest desires and impulses, we are somehow not “being true to our authentic self.” I’ll talk more about this in coming weeks, but: fundamental to the issue of the transgender movement is: “I *am* what I *feel* like I am. Sometimes, what I am on the outside doesn’t match how I feel on the inside. And so rather than conforming my feelings to what is objectively external truth of my body, I prefer to conform my body to what I subjectively feel like inside. I am who I say I am.” It sounds a lot like what Moses heard at the burning bush, doesn’t it? The problem is: that’s not how Scripture defines mankind. And that made me realize that before I dove in to biblical sexuality, I needed to back up and consider mankind’s **identity** at its most fundamental level.

And it’s not just sexuality where our culture struggles with identity. The last several years have found us in the greatest racial tensions in America since the Civil Rights Movement. Ethnic tribalism and divisions have exploded—especially in the last five or so years. But that’s not altogether surprising, since the world tells us that men and women are evolved animals, whose ethnicities are literally different races, different species. And then there’s the pinnacle of our moral barbarism: the legally-protected right to kill defenseless little babies in the womb’s of their mothers. But why not, if, once again, we’re just evolved animals, with no inherent value or dignity? Why can’t we simply discard the undesirable or incapable? “Survival of the fittest,” right? Legal abortion is a criminal level of brutality and cruelty that derives from a fundamental failure to understand our **identity**. Homosexuality and transgenderism, ethnic partiality and tension, legal abortion—all of that is the result of having absolutely no sense of who—or what—we are as human beings.

And so in this cultural moment, the importance of the doctrine of man is difficult to overestimate. Who am I? *What* am I? Why are we here? Where do I come from? What has gone wrong with the world and with my own heart? Why am I not the way I want to be? What does it mean to be human, as opposed to an animal or a plant? How can I know what is right and what is wrong? Is there an absolute, objective standard for good and evil according to which I must order my life, or is morality subjective and relative? Does man live in an ordered world with a fixed identity? Or is the universe random and chaotic, with man free to determine his own identity? These are the questions that a biblical anthropology answers. The Bible is to man what the owner’s manual is to your car: detailed instructions about what we are and how we are to function direct from the One who created us and designed us. And it’s our society’s rejection of the Bible’s answers to these questions that has the world in the chaos that it’s in.

Man as Creature

In the first sentence of the first chapter of John Calvin’s magisterial classic, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin famously writes, “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves” (1.1.1). Our understanding of who we are is inseparable from our understanding of who God is and how we relate to Him. And it has never been more important for Christians to find our **identity** in what God says we are.

And that identity begins with the doctrine of **creation**. It begins with the fact that we are not animals, evolved from goo! Still less are we semi-divine demi-gods, free to be the masters of our fate and the captains of our souls! The very first thing to say about man is that he is a *creature*. This is where our identity begins. This means that we are not ultimate. We are accountable to the God who has made us. We look to Him to tell us who we are and how we must live. And following upon that, in the same breath that we learn that man is a creature, we learn that we have been created in the *image* of God. We are image-bearers, who have inherent worth and dignity as we reflect the glory of our Creator. Genesis 1:27: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” This is the first thing Scripture says about our identity. Psalm 100 verse 3: “It is *He* who made us, and *not* we ourselves.” Most fundamentally, we say that man is the **direct creation** of the Creator God.

In their systematic theology, Joel Beeke and Paul Smalley say, “The Bible roots our understanding of man in creation. Human life has purpose and meaning because we did not come into being by accident or by our own will, but by the will of God, who created both us and the world in which we live. Therefore, we belong to him and exist for him. ... The doctrine of creation anchors our worldview in God, directs our lives to his glory, and protects us against idolatry” (*RST*, 2:55).

The Doctrine of Creation

Now, questions concerning the creation of man involve us in a study of the creation of all things. And the biblical doctrine of **creation** is always under attack from those who would seek to undermine the biblical worldview. If you want to free man from his accountability to his Creator and the totalizing claims of the law of God so he can be left alone to sin in peace, you start at the very root. You seek to undermine the doctrine of creation. If there is no God, then man isn’t a creature accountable to his Creator. It is the denial of the biblical doctrine of creation, decades ago, that has us in the chaos we are living in now.

But of course there’s just one problem with that: there’s a whole creation to explain away! And it’s a tall order to be looking around at the glories of a creation—breathing in the blessings of a bountiful, personal Creator each moment—while at the same time denying that any Creator has created the creation you’re living in and enjoying.

And so what has Satan done? He has focused his attacks on the doctrine of creation itself. And so there have been many **false theories** of creation. There are myriad **polytheistic** accounts of creation, in which the material creation is said to be the result of sexual reproduction or warfare among the gods. There are **pantheistic** accounts, as in Hinduism, which just erase the Creator-creature distinction and say that the creation *is* God, and God *is* the creation. You see that some in Gnosticism, where creation emanates from the being of God. And you see it in the new-age neopaganism—any time someone personalizes the inanimate universe (because they’ve denied the personal God who is), and says something like, “The Universe is being kind to us today.” There are also **panentheistic** accounts, which say not that God *is* the creation, but that He is *in* every aspect of creation. God is the soul of the universe, and the physical creation is like His body (cf. *RST*, 2:58). But that also doesn’t adequately maintain the Creator-creature distinction. And then, really the opposite side of the same error, **materialism** claims that physical matter is all there is. The universe is eternal, and there is no immaterial. There has been no *creation*; what we see just always was, in some form. This is the fundamental assumption—the *a priori*, dare we say, unscientific presupposition of atheism, Darwinism, Neo-Darwinism, any sort of model that depends on the Big Bang.

And what’s the uniting factor in all of that? It is the worship of the creation at the expense of the worship of the Creator. Pantheism and panentheism ultimately call for the worship of the creature by failing to distinguish God’s being from the creature’s being. The creation is God; worship it. Materialism, having evacuated any place for an immaterial Creator-God from their worldview, in the absence of the true God make the physical creation god. “Since there’s no true God really there, we’ll make a god out of what there is.”

And it’s just such a testimony of the fundamentally religious nature of the heart of man. We are inveterate worshipers. We must worship *something*. And if you have a sin-fueled agenda to suppress the truth in unrighteousness (as Romans 1:18 says)—an *a priori* commitment to reject the biblical Creator because you don’t want to be subject to His law—you do exactly what Romans 1:23–25 says you do: you “exchange the glory of the incorruptible God ... [to] worship and serve the *creature* rather than the Creator.” You see, “if the universe has no Creator, then *it* becomes our God” (*RST*, 2:60).

Six-Day Creationism

But against all of that truth-suppression, Scripture testifies with uniformity, with clarity, and with authority that the one true God, the God of the Bible, has created all things by the word of His mouth in the span of **six, literal 24-hour days**. And if we are going to have any hope of confronting the lies of our culture with the truth of man’s **identity**—first of all as the **direct creation** of God—we have to be able to defend Scripture’s teaching of **six-day creation**. Those

two issues are inextricably linked. They stand and fall together. And it's why, if you say in a young earth or a six-day creation, you get laughed out of every classroom, every news room, every break room you walk into—because the natural man must scoff at this most basic, fundamental claim if he's going to create his own identity and live according to his own morality. And so we need to be able to defend this most foundational doctrine.

You say, “Wait a minute. I know plenty of believers who hold to a Christian worldview but reject a six-day creation. There are theistic evolutionists; there are old-earth creationists; and they would agree with everything you said about man's identity as a *creature*. You don't need to be a six-day creationist to reject the postmodern descent into absurdity!” And that's true; I certainly don't want to accuse old-earthers of being in step with the sexual revolution.

However, I *am* willing to say that these brothers are inconsistent on this point. And while they may not realize it, by compromising Scripture's clear teaching of six-day creation, they give ground to the atheist, or to the evolutionist, who wants to reimagine man as an animal. How? Because when you allow the *infallible* and *unchangeable* text of Scripture to be interpreted through the lens of the *always* fallible and *always* changing precepts of contemporary scientific consensus, you yield in principle the authority and sufficiency of Scripture to the unbeliever. In other words, if the Bible doesn't mean what it says when it claims that God created the world in six days, upon what consistent basis can we insist that the Bible means what it says when it claims that God has directly created man in His own image, or when it says that God created them male and female, and that male and female are fixed and unchangeable categories? We would cut out our legs from under us.

So, we do not interpret Scripture in light of science; we interpret science—and the observations we make about the phenomenal world—in light of Scripture. And so in undertaking a defense of man's identity as the direct creation of God, we must take up **a defense of six-day creation**. And to do that, we'll give **six biblical arguments** for the truth that God created the world in six days.

Now, you may say, “Hold on, Mike. You're about to turn to the Bible to argue that God created the world in six days. But the people we're arguing with don't accept the authority of the Bible, so they're not going to care what we have to say.” Well, first, I answer that objection by pointing back to last week's message. We established that God is the God of truth, and that His Word revealed in the Scriptures is the Word of Truth. And we showed how when you reject that claim you have to deny reality and embrace absurdity, which is a demonstrated failure of a worldview. But in addition, my response to that objection is: Since when does the hard-hearted unbelief of the world give us leave to disobey our marching orders to go into all the world and preach the Gospel? We preach the truth no matter what the enemies of the truth accept or reject. And we trust that in the actual proclamation of the word of truth that God would open blind eyes and grant the new birth (2 Cor 4:4, 6; 1 Pet 1:23–25).

I. Genesis 1–3 is Historical Narrative

Ok, well, that **first argument** for six-day creation is that Genesis 1–3 is **historical narrative**. Many objections to the literal truthfulness of the Bible’s creation account are arguments about genre. They claim that Moses didn’t even intend to write a record of actual history; he meant it as poetry. And they point to a poetic-like refrain as evidence: “And there was evening and there was morning, one day,” and “a second day,” and so on (vv. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). And they point to the beautiful parallels between the lights on Day 1 and the shining celestial bodies on Day 4, the waters on Day 2 and the sea creatures on Day 5, and so on. And they say, “You see? It’s just poetry! You’re not supposed to take poetry literally!” And of course, yes, poetry uses figurative language. But even so, poetic language and artful structure can still reveal literal truth. The ten plagues of Egypt in Exodus 7 to 12 are presented in a skillful, structured literary form. Should we reject the historicity of the plagues? Matthew lists six sets of seven generations in his genealogy of Jesus. Should we regard that record as unreliable? No. Literal truth can be presented in an artistic form without calling its historicity into question.

But even beyond that, there are very clear indicators that Genesis 1–3 is not Hebrew poetry but historical narrative. Number one: we do not see the synonymous parallelism that characterizes so much of Hebrew poetry, like we see in the Psalms or in the poetic portions of the prophets. Instead, we see the plentiful use of the *wayyiqtol*—a verb construction that moves Hebrew narrative along, just like you see in the books of the Kings or Chronicles. Dr. Stephen Boyd at The Master’s University analyzed passages in the Books of Kings (which no one disputes are narrative passages), and he found that this verb form occurs more frequently in Genesis than in Kings. “*Then* God said, ‘Let there be light’; *and* there was light. *And* God saw that the light was good; *and* God separated the light from the darkness.” Those “and-and-and” and “then-then-then” constructions—the *waw*-conjunction with the imperfect verb—are *the* key grammatical indicator of Hebrew historical narrative, recounting a historical record of events.

Number two, later on in the Book of Genesis, we see references to the Garden of Eden right alongside references to other biblical place names that no one believes are non-historical. Sometimes people will say that Genesis 1–3 or even Genesis 1–11 is non-historical. But most everyone agrees that by Genesis 12, the author intends to be writing a factual record of history. But one chapter after that, in Genesis 13:10, you have a reference to “the garden of Yahweh,” right alongside the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as a reference to “the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.” If we’re not intended to take Eden as a literal, historical place, with what level of consistency can we say that Sodom, Gomorrah, Egypt, and Zoar are real places? None. Just as those other places are historical, so also is the garden of Yahweh. (And we see other references to Eden throughout the Old Testament: Isa 51:3; Ezek 28:13; 31:9, 16, 18; 36:35; Joel 2:3).

A third indicator that Genesis 1–3 is historical narrative is: the genealogies that appear throughout the later chapters of Genesis link the creation narrative in chapters 1 through 3 to the rest of history. Genesis 5 treats Adam as a historical person who fathered real children, who then fathered children of their own. We go from Adam, to Seth, all the way down to Noah and his sons—which brings us through the post-flood world. And then Genesis 10 and 11 include genealogies of Noah’s sons which take us all the way to Abram in Genesis 12. And then we have the narratives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then in Genesis 46 we have the genealogy of Jacob’s sons through to Joseph. So again: Where do you draw the line? You can’t say that Genesis 1–3 is non-historical myth while the rest is history, because Genesis 5 treats Genesis 1–3 as history by linking Adam to Seth to Noah! You can’t draw the line at chapter 12, because chapters 10 and 11 link Noah (and by implication Adam) to Abraham.

And we can go further than that. The chronicler in 1 Chronicles 1–3 takes the genealogy from Adam all the way to David. If we reject the historicity of Adam and the events recorded in Genesis 1–3, we either have to doubt David’s historical existence (which is absurd), or we cast suspicion on the consistency and reliability of Scripture. The genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3 goes all the way back to Adam. And so you get the point. If later portions of Scripture depend upon and refer to previous events as if they were actual historical events, and if those historical events didn’t take place, then there is doubt cast upon the historicity and reliability of those later portions of Scripture, and not just Genesis 1–3 or 1–11.

Besides this, number four: Jesus Himself reads Genesis as historical narrative, and His opinion is pretty important. In Mark 10:6–8, Jesus quotes from the first wedding sermon in Genesis 2, and not only treats it as true history, but says that it took place “from the beginning of creation,” which means that the marriage of Adam and Eve did not occur after thousands of years of evolution! Similarly, in Luke 11:50–51, Jesus pronounces woe upon the scribes, and He speaks of how the leaders of Israel shed the blood of the prophets “since the foundation of the world, ... from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.” Jesus considers the murder of Abel in Genesis 4 to have happened at “the foundation of the world,” not thousands or millions of years after the foundation of the world. Friends, Jesus was a young-earth creationist.

And so, the fact that Genesis 1–3 is historical narrative is a decisive argument for six-day creationism, if for no other reason than that it means that we should read the text to say what it seems to be saying on its face. It’s not poetry; it doesn’t invite figurative, non-historical interpretation. It means what it says.

II. Creation *Ex Nihilo*

A second key argument for six-day creationism is that **God created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing.** God did not create the universe with pre-existing matter, as theistic theories of evolution teach.

He did not, as the theistic evolutionists argue, “endow created reality with potencies which spontaneously, by energies intrinsic to them, [then] produce the various forms of life” (Murray, “The Origin of Man,” *Works*, 2:3). No, God made everything.

Genesis 1:1 says that “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” And the phrase, “the heavens and the earth,” is what we call a merism—a figure of speech that stands for all that exists. He’s created heaven and earth and all things in between. You see that also in Psalm 146:6 and Acts 14:15: He “made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.” There is nothing that God did not create. There is no eternal matter. There is only eternal God.

Hebrews 11:3 says, “What is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” God didn’t take eternally-existing materials and turn them into something else. As Romans 4:17 says, He “call[ed] into being that which [did] not exist.” That is an explicit statement of creation out of nothing. He calls into being that which does not exist.

III. Creation *In Verbo*

And then, very related to that, is the fact that God did not only create *ex nihilo*, but **He created *in verbo***—that is to say, **by His word**.

We just mentioned Hebrews 11:3. The earlier half of that verse says, “By faith we understand that the universe was created *by the word of God*” (ESV). We see that plainly in the creation narrative itself. Genesis 1 repeats over and over again: “Then God *said*,” “and it was *so*.” So often you hear people say, “Well, Genesis tells us *that* God created, but it doesn’t tell us *how* God created.” Sure it does! It says He spoke the world into existence! He created by His word!

An important text is Psalm 33 verses 6 to 9: “By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.” God created by His word. And then verse 9: “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” Those “ands” there are also *wayyiqtol*s. He spoke and it was done. There is no lapse of time between “He spoke” and “it was done.” The text does not allow for us to understand by that, “He spoke, and millions of years past, and then finally the evolutionary process yielded stars and fish and creeping things.” No, He spoke, and immediately upon His speaking, it was done. This does not allow for an old earth.

IV. The Sabbath

And then, **fourth**, Six-Day Creationism is substantiated by the existence of **the Sabbath**. Exodus 20 verses 8 to 11 establishes the pattern of a six-day work-week and a seventh day of rest, on the basis of the fact that God created in six days and rested on the seventh day. Moses (who wrote Genesis 1), in Exodus 20, treats Genesis 1 as the straightforward history that it is, and appeals to

the six days of creation as the foundation for Israel's Sabbath rest on the seventh day. "In six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, . . . and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." Exodus 20:11 is rendered absolutely meaningless if God did not create in six literal days.

And that just fits so well with a straightforward reading of the text of Genesis 1. It's a historical sequence of creation in six literal days. We see that in the repetition of the "evening and morning" refrain, which reflects an ordinary cycle of night and day, and is never used figuratively. We see it in the Hebrew term *yom*—the word for "day"—which, when used with a number—like "one day" in Genesis 1:5, or "a second day" (verse 8)—is never used figuratively in Scripture. It is only used to describe a 24-hour period. So, Exodus 20:8–11 tells us in explicit terms exactly the same thing that Genesis 1 tells us in explicit terms: "In six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth."

V. Man God's Direct Creation

Fifth, Scripture uses three different terms to repeatedly emphasize that man is the **direct creation** of God. Number five: man is God's **direct creation**. He did not evolve through divinely-guided processes. Genesis 1:26, 2:18, and 5:1 says that God made the man and the woman. In Genesis 1:27, Moses uses the term created three times in just that one verse. Genesis 2:7–8 says that Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground. This is a repeated emphasis that man is not the product of evolution. He was created as an animate being; there is no inanimate progenitor to the modern man like evolution would demand.

And further to that: man was created *as* the image of God. Genesis 1:26 says, "Let us make man in Our image." Genesis 5:1: "In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God." This is how God made man. He did not create some sort of lower hominid man who evolved into the image of God. No existing creature was invested with the image of God. Man never received God's image; man was the image of God from the beginning of His existence. As we said before, Jesus says in Mark 10:6 that "God made them male and female" "from the beginning of creation." He wasn't an evolutionary development.

VI. Man God's Unique Creation

Sixth, man is not only God's direct creation; he is His **unique** creation. This uniqueness separates man from the rest of creation and thus requires that he not be understood as simply another of the animals.

Scripture testifies to the uniqueness of man in several ways. One is by man's being the climax of creation. He is created on Day 6 after everything else, and only after *man's* creation is God's

work pronounced *very* good (1:31) as opposed to just good (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). Two, man's creation is unique in being pictured as the result of determinate counsel in chapter 1 verse 26. With everything else, it's been, "Let there be." But with man, it is, "Let *Us* make." There is a note of deliberation there, a consultation within the plurality of the Godhead, suggesting wisdom and intentional planning. Three, no other creature is said to be the image of God. Everything else is made "after their kind," but man is made "in *Our* image." Man stands in the closest possible relation to God, distinct from the animals. Four, we also see uniqueness in that, because man bears God's image, to kill a man is to merit capital punishment: Genesis 9:2–6. God kills animals to provide Adam and Eve with a covering in 3:21. He was pleased with Abel's sacrifice of animals in Genesis 4:4. If someone kills an animal, it's not necessarily a problem. But, Genesis 9:6, "whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man." And five, also related to that, no other creature is tasked with being God's vice-regent and exercising dominion over all other creatures, as man is. Chapter 1, verses 26 to 28: "Let them rule ... fill the earth and subdue it; and rule ... over every living thing." And Psalm 8:6: "You make [man] to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet."

And so again, this **uniqueness** separates man from the rest of creation, which would be incongruous if he were simply a more highly evolved hominid but essentially of the same nature as the other animals.

Objections

Now, of course, not everyone agrees with that presentation, and so they raise objections. Some object that it's impossible to have light—which is created on Day 1—without the sun—which is created on Day 4. But obviously, God can create light without the sun. Surely, we know that there will be light in the new creation without the sun. Revelation 21:23 says, "The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (cf. 22:5). His creating light without the sun shows His independence of the celestial bodies and His all-sufficiency to provide for His creation of Himself.

Another objection is that too many events take place on Day 6 for it to be 24 hours. "How could Adam name all the animals in that time?" and so on. Well, for one thing, he may have named the kinds of animals rather than every individual species. For another, don't forget that God brought all the animals to Adam; he didn't have to go searching for them. Third, Adam's pre-fallen intelligence and creativity may be beyond our comprehension; he may have not been subject to the same limitations we assume he would be in a post-fall world. And finally, we can't forget that according to Genesis 7:2, Noah brought two of every kind of unclean animal and seven pairs of every clean animal onto the ark in a single day.

And of course there are other objections, as well as totally divergent theories of creation proposed, like the Gap Theory, the Day-Age View, and the Framework Hypothesis. And we need to understand those claims and be able to address them biblically. We don't have time to get into them now, but some of you might have remembered that I presented a version of this material this past summer for Sundays in July. And so if you're interested in why the Gap Theory, the Day-Age View, and the Framework Hypothesis are not viable accounts of the biblical doctrine of creation, I refer you to that message in July of 2022.

But one category of objection that I'll address further is the claim that the Adam we read about in Genesis 1–3 was not an actual historical person, but instead stands for “a group of highly developed hominids to whom God gave moral and spiritual consciousness.” Beeke and Smalley explain, “In this view, the human race descended from ‘a group of several thousand individuals who lived about 150,000 years ago.’ ... In this view, Genesis 2 is understood to refer not to the literal creation of Adam and Eve, but is ‘a symbolic allegory of the entrance of the human soul into a previously soulless animal kingdom’” (*RST*, 2:143).

There are several problems with this, though. First, the Bible testifies to man being the singular direct creation of God, rather than some sort of group of hominids or man-like animals. Genesis 2:7 tells us that God formed a single individual from the dust of the ground: “the man,” singular—not a clan, a tribe, or a people. The verse goes on to say that God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils—that is, the man's nostrils—not the nostrils of hundreds or thousands of hominids or primates or what have you. And then the verse says, “*The man* became a living creature,” singular once again. And note: not “the living creature became a man,” but “the man became a living creature.” Further, in Genesis 2:18, God says that it is not good for this man to be alone. “Alone” cannot describe a clan, tribe, or people. And the reason it's bad for him to be alone is because he can't reproduce and fulfill the divine mandate to fill the earth. It just doesn't fit.

Other objections are raised, such as the fact that the Hebrew word *adam* doesn't refer to a particular individual named Adam but to mankind generally. It describes the “every-man,” but not any man in particular. Well, in response to that it must be noted that, yes, sometimes *adam* refers to the whole race, but there are other times where it unmistakably refers to the father of the race, the individual God created and called Adam. In Genesis 5:3, Moses says, “When Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.” This is not referring to the human race in general living 130 years or fathering a son; it's referring to the man Adam.

Another objection claims Genesis 1–3 chronicles only the history of Israel. But the genealogies record Adam and Eve as the parents of the entire human race. Cain, Abel, Seth, Noah, are not Israelites. “Israel” doesn't exist until Abraham, at the earliest, and perhaps not even until God

changes Jacob's name in Genesis 32. Besides all that, Genesis 3:20 calls Eve "the mother of *all* the living."

Implications of a Historical Adam

But why is this so important? Well, in light of this thesis concerning the basis of man's identity, consider with me **five implications** of the doctrine of a historical Adam created directly by God on Day 6 of His creation of the world.

First, without a six-day creation of a historical Adam, we lose **the basis for the dignity of mankind**, because mankind couldn't be anything but another evolved animal. And in that case, there really would be no basis for the humane treatment of men over animals. People kill animals for food, for sport; but if you kill a man for food or for sport, you are liable to lose your own life. What accounts for the difference, if Adam is not a historical person and man is just a high-functioning animal?

Not only that, but a historical Adam is **the basis for the unity of mankind**. Acts 17:26 says, "And He made *from one man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth." The fact that every human being has descended from the one man, Adam, means that there are not multiple races. Biblically speaking, there is no such thing as European humanity, or African humanity, or American humanity, or Asian humanity. Those may be ethnicities, but the difference between them are superficial characteristics that describe our behavior and our cultural backgrounds, not what we are in our essence. Something like 99.8% of the genetics of every human being on the earth are identical. There is one human race.

Our culture is suffering so mightily from ethnic strife, which is largely being fomented by the secular left. And as the people of God, we want to do something about that! We want to help! But we're not going to help by embracing Critical Race Theory, which is just as racist as the problems they're aiming to solve. The only way the church will successfully battle these ethnic tensions is to insist upon the biblical worldview—which starts with the unity of the race in Adam as image-bearers of Almighty God. If you remove that, you undermine the basis for ethnic unity, and you clear the way for conceiving humanity as genuinely distinct races of people—which, by the way, was the stated intention of Darwinian evolution. The full title of Darwin's famous book is: *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. Darwinian evolutionary theory was the foundation of eugenics. The unfavored races—like Jews, according to Hitler, or Blacks, according to Margaret Sanger—were inferior, and needed to be snuffed out so mankind could progress in our evolution. The biblical doctrine of the historical Adam destroys all of that, because we all have the same daddy. Calvin wrote, "It was [God's] will that we should proceed from one fountain, in order that our

desire of mutual concord might be the greater, and that each might the more freely embrace the other as his own flesh” (*Commentaries*, Gen 1:28).

And then, not only dignity and unity, but the historical Adam is **the basis for the Bible’s doctrine of sin**. Romans 5:12 says, “Through *one man* sin entered into the world.” Romans 5:17 says, “By the transgression of *the one*, death reigned through the one.” First Corinthians 15:21 says, “For since by *a man* came death...” and then in verse 22, “In Adam all die.” The Bible’s explanation for the corruption of this world is sin. And the Bible’s explanation for how sin intruded into God’s very good creation is the sin of the one man, Adam, who stood as the federal representative of the entire human race, so that his sin was counted to be our sin, and so that all creation was cursed as a result of his transgression. Without Adam, where has the brokenness of this world come from? Was the world God created and called “very good” created with sin, evil, and death in it from the beginning? Did He create evil directly? If not, is He somehow overthrown by forces of evil outside of His control? Without a historical fall of a historical Adam, we lose the doctrine of original sin, and we lose the doctrine of a good, righteous, and sovereign God.

More than that, we lose the Gospel. The historicity of Adam is a Gospel issue. Why do I say that? Because in those passages that I’ve just quoted—Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15—**Adam is as integral to the logic of salvation as Christ is** (cf. Yarbrough, as in *RST*, 2:151). That entire paragraph in Romans 5 is Paul’s doctrine of Adam and Christ as the two heads of humanity. Romans 5:14 says that Adam “is a type of Him who was to come.” Adam is a type of Christ! Verse 19 summarizes things well: “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.” First Corinthians 15:21–22 says, “For since by a man [Adam] came death, by a man also [Christ] came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” Later, in 1 Corinthians 15:45, Christ is contrasted with Adam, and is even called “the last Adam.” You can’t have the Gospel without a historical Adam who historically sinned, because without Adam you can’t have a historical Jesus come as the antitype of Adam to accomplish redemption. If Adam has not sinned in history, then Christ hasn’t atoned in history, and we all remain damned in our sins. This isn’t about Hebrew literary criticism. This is about the Gospel.

And then, as we said before, there is no way we could deny the historicity of Adam and not lose *any* consistent **basis for the authority of the rest of Scripture**. Why? Because even aside from the genealogies—which connect Adam to Cain and Abel, to Seth and Noah, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, to David and even to Jesus—besides all of that, there are numerous passages of Scripture that refer to Adam as a genuine, historical person. In Job 31:33, Job asks, “Have I covered my transgressions like Adam?” Hosea 6:7 says, “Like Adam, they have transgressed the covenant.” In Romans 5:14, Paul says, “Nevertheless death reigned from *Adam* until *Moses*,” which not only affirms the Genesis account of the fall of man into sin, but also treats Adam as a

historical figure right alongside Moses. How could we consistently deny the historicity of Adam without calling into question the historicity of Moses?

In 1 Corinthians 11:8–9, Paul says, “Man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.” Where’s Paul getting that from? From the creation narrative of Genesis 1–3. He seems to think that the creation account has consequence for how we understand our identity as men and women, today. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul treats the fall as history, and Eve as a historical person when he says, “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

And then in 1 Timothy 2:13–14, Paul’s entire basis for his instruction concerning the distinct roles for men and women in marriage and in the church is, “For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” Now, if you don’t like the conclusions that Paul draws from that teaching—like, “I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet”—then what do you have to do? You have to undermine the basis upon which that teaching is given. If Adam and Eve are not really historical, what is the basis upon which we can enforce this Spirit-inspired understanding of our own identity as men and women and the proper roles we engage in as a result of our identity?

But don’t you see? That’s the entire point. Enemies of the truth desire to be entirely free from the accountability they have before their Creator! And they realize that it is only when we can unmoor ourselves from the doctrine of our creation in the image of God that the basis for our fixed identity is undermined. Beeke and Smalley make an insightful comment on this. They say, on page 151, “If we rip the Genesis account out of the flow of history and regard it as a myth, it loses its authority to reveal God’s will for all mankind. However, if we view Adam as the first man God created, then we are able to apply the Old Testament in the same way that Jesus and Paul did to illuminate what it means to be male and female. In this age, when the church is so ravaged by moral relativism, militant feminism, and homosexual activism, we are blessed to have a solid basis for our sexual ethics in God’s creation ordinances” (*RST*, 2:151).

And that connects this week’s sermon to last week’s, and to the ones to come. The point is: if these later texts of Scripture all treat Genesis as literal history and Adam as a literal, historical person, then if we say that the events of Genesis didn’t take place or that Adam was not a historical person, the reliability of the entire Scripture is overturned. If you don’t have Adam, you don’t have the Bible. And if you don’t have the Bible, you don’t have a reliable revelation of **truth** from the mouth of the Triune **God of truth**. And that means: you’ve got the chaos and absurdity that we spoke about last week, and that we live in every day.

Conclusion

But against all of that, let it be heard with clarity: this is who you are, Christian! This is your identity! You are not an evolved animal! You are not a slave to your own basest passions and impulses! You are not of no more dignity than to be discarded when society determines that you are no longer useful, convenient, or wanted! And neither are you a little mini-god, unaccountable to anyone but yourself, fabricating your own “truth,” or speaking your own identity into existence! You are, most fundamentally, a *creature*, and so you are accountable to God your Creator, subject to the identity He has given you, subject to the law of His mouth as the rule of your life. You must order your life as He says you must, under the Lordship of His Son, Jesus Christ; or you must suffer the consequences of divine justice—both in this life, in which the way of the transgressor is hard (Prov 13:15, KJV), and in the life to come, in which judgment will be righteously poured out on all who do not bow the knee to Christ.

You are a creature. But you are not just a creature. You are a creature made in His image. And so you are the unique objects of His favor and blessing, possessed of an unspeakable dignity that sets you apart from the rest of creation. And we’ll speak next time about the implications of our being image-bearers of Almighty God.