

WHO IS MAN?

Genesis 1:26-2:3

Key Verse 27

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

As we thought about who God is, now we turn our attention to who we are, in view of the Creation. The Bible is God-centric, as is creation, but man is also important. We cannot understand ourselves without understanding God first, and as we know ourselves more, we appreciate and know God more as well. We derive who we are through knowing God, in whose image we are created.

1. Read verses 26-27. After having created the world, including an environment to sustain life as well as plants and animals, what did God decide to do? What does it mean that man is a created being? Read verse 27 again. What does it mean that God created mankind in his own image? What does this suggest about the relationship between God and man?
 - Verse 26. The creation of man was a thought out decision of God, not an accident that happened as a result of putting the world into motion. All the other events in the creation are leading up to this moment.
 - Man is not a product of his own making, or an accident, but one created in the image of God. We are not the Creator, but one created by God. We have a purpose and a place in this world.
 - Verse 27. Man was created on the same day as the animals, so we share many physical characteristics with them. This is where science has confused people with evolutionary process. But there is something about us that is drastically different. This part of us cannot be understood or discovered in nature; we need to study the Bible. To understand ourselves, we need to know God. As we learned of his characteristics, we too share those. We share his communication, love, creativity, diversity, goodness, etc.... just not the same capacities, potencies, and of course we have been corrupted. This image of God transcends gender, and is revealed in both. Image of God that is in us and unchanging, so every person has the potential to be like him.
 - Psalm 139:13-16 and Psalm 8:1-9 are the Psalmist's expression of awe at being created by God. We can learn his image and grow in this dimension. As we observe our failing to measure up to our God, we also long to know him more, as our destiny.
2. How did God bless man and woman? (28) What does it mean to “be fruitful”? What does it mean to “subdue” and “rule over”? How are these commands a blessing? What does this suggest about man and his purpose on the earth?
 - Verse 28. His blessing was spoken word to them, a word of blessing. This blessing was also a clear direction for their life and purpose. More about that in chapter 2. Blessing is not limited to possessions, but deeper answers to deeper questions. The blessing also was that they would do this together.
 - “Be fruitful” is the desire of man to be happy and productive. God wanted them to increase in number, as well as be a blessing to the world. Produce something in abundance.
 - This is not oppressive words, but words of stewardship, in order to take care of the world as a charge. This is necessary for them to be fruitful.
 - These commands are a blessing as they give man real meaning and purpose in life. These two tasks represent all that human beings find truly fulfilling in the world: family and productive labor, exploration, science, knowledge, etc... We learn about to manage better. This is God's choosing and are the main point of man, why he was created. He gave man permission and authority.
 - Man was not created outside the world, but has a meaning and purpose here. We have a task to do and were created for this purpose. To find this purpose, we need to find God. This gives meaning to our studies, our

pursuits, relationships and everything we do, as well as image. Who we are and our purpose are integral. Francis Collins, Language of God.

3. Read verses 29-30. How did God provide for the physical needs of mankind in carrying out his purpose? How should man respond to God's gracious gift? (Ps 104:14, 27, 31, 33)
 - Verses 29-30. God provided for them all that they needed to carry out this purpose. Matthew 6:33.
 - Thankful! Psalm 104:14, 27, 31, 33 read, *"He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth..."*²⁷ *These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time..."*³¹ *May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works....*³³ *I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."*
4. Read verse 31. What was God's evaluation of all that he had created? What does verse 31 teach us about God and the world he created? What does this teach us about mankind, including yourself? What difference does it make to know that God created me for a good purpose? (Eph 2:10)
 - Verse 31. God said it was very good, as in completed and perfect.
 - God is very good and what he does is very good.
 - God made us to be very good.
 - Ephesians 2:10. We were made with a good purpose to be carried out.
5. Read 2:1-3. What did God do on the seventh day? Why did he bless the seventh day and make it holy? (See Mark 2:27; Ex 20:8) Do you think God needs to rest? Why did God rest, and give the command to keep the Sabbath? What does this suggest about mankind and his need for the Sabbath? (Mt 11:28-29)
 - God rested. There is no closure to the seventh day, and so Hebrews says we are looking forward to that Sabbath day.
 - He made it holy and set it apart for man, as a day to honor the LORD and find rest in him.
 - Probably not, as he is omnipotent.
 - God wants mankind to also observe this rest.
 - We need proper rest, and to worship God, devoted to him, to rest the image of God in us and to please God, being holy, as worship God. This is the focus of God.