

Genesis 1...An Overview of the Creation Days (Day 6)

Day six (vv. 24–31; 2:7).

“God had **formed** the sky and **filled** it with heavenly luminaries and flying birds. He had **formed** the seas and **filled** the waters with various aquatic creatures (cf Creation Days 2 and 5...Forming and Filling)

Creation reaches its climax when on the sixth day God fills the land with animal life and then creates the first man who, with his wife, would have dominion over the earth and its creatures.” Warren Weirsbe

Richard Phillips on Day Six...

As the second day prepared the waters below and the sky above to be filled by God’s creatures on the fifth day, so also ***the third day prepared the land, which God filled on the sixth day with living creatures...*** “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.’ And it was so” (Gen. 1:24).

The fact that the ground animals are also called “living creatures” indicates that they are part of the special creation that began on the fifth day with the fish and birds. Here, God says, “Let the earth bring forth” (Gen. 1:24). It is God who made them, yet the beasts are part of the landscape of the planet; they belong, in a sense, to the earth.

The land animals were created in three main categories. First is “livestock.” These are domesticated animals such as cattle. Their name (Hebrew, *behemah*) has the root meaning of being “dumb,” signifying God’s intention for them to provide lowly service to mankind. ***The second category is “creeping things,” which would include reptiles, worms, and other beings that crawl on or under the ground. Third is “beasts of the earth,” which refers to the wild animals, such as lions and bears.*** The Hebrew for “beasts is “living things,” signifying the vitality and energy of these remarkable creatures. Even in the peace of the original creation, before death and violence, these wild beasts “were designed by God to live free and undomesticated. ***Within these categories were all the main groups of animals, each “according to their kinds” (Gen. 1:24). They were not the product of random chance or evolution but products of God’s personal design and powerful creation. “According to their kinds”***

also implies their created capacity to reproduce, like the fish and birds multiplying and filling the earth.

Genesis 1 does not launch into a taxonomy of the various species of land beasts. But it certainly invites this kind of study to the glory of God. Indeed, it is through the diversity of the animals, together with fish and birds, and also the staggering complexity of the stars and galactic systems, that God displays a creative imagination that overwhelms our hearts. God not only made these wonderful things and creatures, but imbued nature with his creative capacity. “Let the waters swarm,” he commanded, and “Let the earth bring forth” (Gen. 1:20, 24).

David Wilkinson writes: “God builds into the natural world the process of his creativity. Thus the natural world provides an intricate tapestry bearing witness to the creativity of God.”

Psalm 104:24 exults: “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.”

For all the glorious diversity of the sea, air, and land creatures, God was not yet finished in filling his earth. There was one last creature to come forth and live, a creature above all the others and designed especially for a personal fellowship with the Creator.

Genesis 1:26:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Before exploring man’s special status in relationship to God, we should note that mankind was made in solidarity with the other “living creatures” of the earth. Man shares this designation with the animals, being referred to in Genesis 2:7 as “a living creature,” just as they are. Moreover, while Genesis 1:27 employs the third instance of God’s special creation (Hebrew bara) in this chapter, marking off man as a new and special being, verse 26 first sees God’s making him in a manner similar to other living creatures. So while man is categorically different from the fish, birds, and animals, he is like them in significant ways. Like the animals, man is made on the sixth day from the earth (Gen. 1:24; 2:7), he feeds on the same food that they eat (1:29–30), and he reproduces according to God’s blessing just as they do (vv. 22, 28)....

Still, it is mankind's special relationship to God that shapes our identity. Viewing man among the "living creatures," we can note his supremacy as the climax of God's creation. "

Excerpt From: Richard Phillips. "Genesis."

The verb form "Let us" highlights the uniqueness of man's creation. The impersonal verb, "Let there be," occurs with the rest of creation, but here it is personal "Let us". The plurality of God is stressed. Relationship lies at the heart of God's very being, so man is created in relationship first with God...Michael Barrett

Kent Hughes on the Triune God in Creation of Man...

Some have tried to sidestep this very significant change to "Let Us" by seeing it as a conversation with the angels. But that is impossible because angels are not in the image of God. Besides, angels can add nothing to God's omniscient wisdom. Others have attempted to prove it is a plural of majesty such as was used by ancient potentates. But this idea is flawed because the point of the verse is not God's majesty.

In truth it is the plural of deliberation, here divine deliberation.

Henri Blocher explains:

"God addresses himself, but this he can do only because he has a Spirit who is both with him and distinct from him at the same time. Here are the first glimmerings of a Trinitarian revelation."

The reference to "the Spirit of God" in 1:2, hovering over the waters, demonstrates a co-participant in creation. And the New Testament gives the full meaning (the *sensus plenior*) when it teaches the radical involvement of Christ in creation (cf. John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 4:11). ***So now we see that an awesome declaration about man is made by God in consultation with himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)***

Richard Phillips on God "Forming" Man...

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).

The verb “formed” suggests the potter making a work of art in his skilled hands. The human body is indeed a work of art, an amazingly complex organism that only the wisdom of God could design and the power of God create.

The physical matter for Adam’s body came from the ground, for the name “Adam” means “taken out of the ground,” but the life Adam possessed came from God.

Man in the Image of God...an Overview

God is spirit (John 4:24) and thus invisible (1 Tim. 1:17). **God created man to be His visible, living image on earth (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15) with qualities such as knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) that give man unique value (9:6), capacity for familiar relationship to God (5:1–3; Rom. 8:29), and dominion over the world as God’s representative (1:26,28; Ps. 8:4–8)....**Michael Barrett

J G Vos on Man in the Image of God...

”Orthodox theology holds that the image of God in man consists of knowledge, righteousness and holiness (WCF 4.2, WLC Q17, WSC Q 10).

Ephesians 4 ¹⁷ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹ and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. ²⁰ But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²² that, in reference to your former manner of life, you **lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,** ²³ and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind,** ²⁴ and **put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.**

Colossians 3 ⁵ Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶ For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

⁸ But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since **you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,** ¹⁰ **and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him**

Westminster Confession 4.2 After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, **a** with reasonable and immortal souls, **b** endowed with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, **c** having the law of God written in their hearts, **d** and power to fulfil it; **e** and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. **f** Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; **g** which while they kept they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. **h**

a. Gen 1:27. • b. Gen 2:7 with Ecc 12:7 and Mat 10:28 and Luke 23:43. • c. Gen 1:26; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10. • d. Rom 2:14-15. • e. Ecc 7:29. • f. Gen 3:6; Ecc 7:29. • g. Gen 2:17; 3:8-11, 23. • h. Gen 1:26, 28.

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 10. How did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24

Man resembles God, then, in the possession of a rational nature and in the possession of a moral nature. Man, unlike animals, can think and reason; man, unlike the animals, is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. Or we might say that man, unlike the animals, possesses personality and character. ***When man was created by God, his personality and character were perfect. Man was then capable of perfectly reflecting the glory of God. It is even correct to say that man as created was a perfect, though finite (limited) replica of the Godhead.***

All this has been sadly changed, of course, by man's fall into sin. Today man exists in a state of sin and misery. He still possesses the image of God, but inly in a damaged and broken form. It is only by grace, through divine redemption in the plan of salvation, that the image of God can be fully restored.

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Rom. 5:12, 19; Rom. 5:10-20; Eph. 2:1-3; Jas. 1:14-15; Matt. 15:19.

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Gen. 3:8, 10, 24; Eph. 2:2-3; Gal. 3:10; Lam. 3:39; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41, 46.

Man in the Image of God...Implications

“According to Scripture the essence of man consists in this, that he is the image of God. As such he is distinguished from all other creatures and stands supreme as the head and crown of the entire creation.” Louis Berkhof

“Because we bear the image of God, all mankind, and, by extension, each and every human life has a ‘specialness’ and worth that demands respect. Each human life, from its earliest stage of development, is a unique person which bears God’s likeness, and should have the same protection of law that is afforded other “persons” in our society. For this reason, all human life should be respected in law. This respect is due regardless of the manner of conception.” Daniel Becker

Abortion and Man in the Image of God (Excerpts)

Renald Showers

Introduction

Abortion is one of the most controversial issues to confront the world during the last quarter of the 20th century. The very mention of the word generates strong emotions in many people, and the issue has polarized much of society into two very vocal, opposing camps. Pro-life people claim that abortion destroys a complete human life and therefore is morally wrong.

Pro-abortionists reject that claim and assert that abortion simply destroys impersonal tissue and therefore is not morally wrong. Other people take an agnostic approach by declaring that they do not know which view is correct.

The conflicting assertions of the pro-life people and pro-abortionists indicate that the key to the abortion issue is the point at which the human fetus is a complete human being (that is, at what point is it a person possessing a human soul?). Medical science has shed considerable light on this crucial question through its significant research concerning the development of the human fetus. However, in addition to this medical information, ***man should give attention to divine revelation. God created man, and the Scriptures teach that conception ultimately is controlled by God and is a gift of God (Gen. 16:2; 29:31; 30:22–23; Ruth 4:13).***

In addition, the Bible indicates that God superintends and controls the development of the human fetus within the womb (Ps. 139:13–16). God is the ultimate authority and source of knowledge concerning when the fetus is a complete human being possessing a human soul.

God has given divine revelation concerning this matter in the Scriptures. There are two factors in the Bible that bear significantly upon the issue of when the fetus is a complete human being. The first is the fact that man is created in the image of God. The second is the origin of the human soul.

Man in the Image of God

The Scriptures state six times that man was created in the image or likeness of God (Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:1; 96; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jas. 3:9). The fact that four of these six statements are in the first book of the Bible may indicate God's desire to emphasize this truth at the very beginning to readers of the Scriptures, which would indicate that man's creation in the image of God has considerable significance.

That man was created in the image of God does not mean that man is physically like God. Jesus declared that God is a Spirit (Jn. 4:24) and that a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Lk 24:39). Thus, it is not the nature of deity to have a physical body. Since God has no physical body, the image of God in man can not refer to the physical aspect of man's being.

The fact that man is made in the image of God means that he was created to be a personal and moral being. The beings (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who constitute the Godhead are persons possessing intellect, emotions, and will. In

addition, they are moral beings possessing a perfect sense of morality. When God created man, He created him a person possessing intellect, emotions, and will. He also created man a moral being. Man possesses a conscience (a sense of right and wrong) and is held responsible by both God and government for his conduct (Rom. 2:14–16; 13:1–7). Thus, it is in the personal and moral sense that man bears a resemblance to God.

God's creation of man in His image is very significant for several reasons.

- ***First, it indicates that man is the highest form of God's earthly creation.*** The Scriptures do not declare that animals or plants were created in the image of God. They make such a statement concerning man only (Gen. 1:26–27). The fact that man is created in the image of God, but animals and plants are not, indicates that man is unlike an animal or a plant. Human life is distinct from all other earthly life-forms. Man is a personal, moral being; animals and plants are not.

As a personal, moral being man is superior to all other forms of life in God's earthly creation. In the personal realm, for example, man's intellect is different from and far superior to that of all animal and plant life. Only man has the ability to use mathematics, compose music, paint pictures, design and build such things as airplanes, computers, telephones, space satellites, and televisions, and communicate ideas by arranging words in logical order in sentences and paragraphs. ***Man's uniqueness in the moral realm is seen in the fact that man is the only earthly creature to whom God revealed moral standards and whom God has forbidden to lie, steal or use his sexuality outside the bonds of marriage.***

- ***Second, man's creation in the image of God is significant because it provides the basis for man's dominion over the earth.*** Genesis 1:26–27 indicates that it was in the context of God's decision to create man in His image that He determined to give man ruling authority over all other living things and over the earth itself.

God intended man to be His representative, administering His rule on His behalf over the earthly province of His universal kingdom. For man to know how God wanted him to administer that rule, man had to be a personal being with whom God could communicate intelligently. For man to administer that rule in the proper manner, he had to be a morally responsible being. The fact that God gave man dominion over all other living things on the basis of his being made

in God's image indicates again that God regarded man as distinct from and superior to all other earthly forms of life.

Kent Hughes on Man as God's Vce-Regent...It is most significant that God calls his image-bearers to rule over the earth in verses 26 and 28. God views his image-bearers as royal figures, his vice-regents over creation.

This is what astonished the psalmist in Psalm 8:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet. (vv. 3-6)

There is vast dignity attached to being made in God's image, though marred by the fall.

- ***Third, man's creation in the image of God is significant because it provides the basis for capital punishment of murderers of human life.***

Genesis 9:5-6 indicates several important things concerning capital punishment.

First, it was God who instituted and ordained capital punishment for murderers of human life. God said,

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man (Gen. 9:5-6).

Second, the reason God gave for capital punishment of murderers of human life was, "in the image of God made he man" (v. 6). The person who murders another person is thereby striking the image of God in that other person.

He is putting to death a personal, moral being. God regards this as a very serious offense.

Third, although God ordained capital punishment for animals and humans who murder a human being, He did not ordain it for human beings who kill an animal. God made this distinction because man is made in the image of God, but animals are not. The fact that God made such a distinction indicates again that He regards man as being different from and superior to all other earthly life-forms because man is made in His image. ***God was reiterating that man is not an animal and that human life is extremely valuable to Him.***

- ***Fourth, man's creation in the image of God is significant because it provides the basis for human government.*** Government is one of the ways in which man exercises his God-given dominion over the earth, and the Scriptures teach that when government uses the sword to exercise capital punishment, it is functioning as the minister of God (Rom. 13:4). It can therefore be concluded that ***human government is based on the fact that man is created in of God. Because man is a personal and moral being, government has the God-given task of protecting the lives and property of human beings from harm (Rom. 13:1–7).***

Executive, legislative, and judicial governmental structures, political elections of officials, and decisions about how the resources of the earth are to be used are all governmental functions unique to the human realm on earth and demonstrate again that man is different from all other forms of earthly life. In spite of the fact that human government is far from perfect in its present form and function, the level of its organization and function around the world, in contrast to what exists in the animal realm, indicates once more that man is superior to animals. Again, this difference and superiority are based on man's unique nature among earthly creatures as a creation in the image of God.

- ***Fifth, man's creation in the image of God is significant because it provides the basis for proper social conduct. James 3:9 indicates that since human beings are made in the similitude or image of God, one should be careful in one's conduct in relationship to other people, even in what he says concerning them.*** By contrast, nowhere do the Scriptures declare that a person should be careful about what he says concerning animals or plants. Once again the implication is that man is different from and superior to all other living things because man was made in the image and likeness of God, but no other earthly life-form was made in His image.

Two important things should be noted from this study concerning man's creation in the image of God.

First, all five points indicate the same two truths: Man is different from and superior to the animal and plant kingdoms because man is made in the image of God, and animals and plants are not.

Second, since the image of God in man does not refer to the physical aspect of man's being but to his personal and moral being, and since the personal and moral aspects of man's being are related to the realm of the human soul, it can be concluded that the image of God in man is related to the realm of the human soul. Therefore, God's statement in Genesis 9:5–6 that it is wrong to murder a human being because God made man in His image affirms that it is wrong to murder a human being because of the presence of the human soul in that person.

<https://israelmyglory.org/article/abortion-and-man-in-the-image-of-god/>

Man in the Image of God...Concluding Reflections

“Significantly, immediately after God had created man and woman in his image, he spoke to them: “And God blessed them. And God said to them . . .” (v. 28). This means that ***as image-bearers we can hear and receive God's word. No other creature can do that. This also means that we are responsible, moral, spiritual beings. The continental divide is the question of God's grace. If by his grace we respond, we can live in accord with his word....His grace can enable us to hold forth his word. And we can live with him eternally.***

Elsewhere in Genesis we see more about the image of God that distinguishes human life—namely, that it suggests sonship for both men and women. In Genesis 5:3 we read that Adam fathered a “son” in his own “likeness” and “image.” Although biological descent was in view, the passage also links image with sonship. This idea is picked up in Luke's Gospel, which calls Adam “the son of God” (3:38). ***Being in God's image indicates God's paternity and a filial relationship.***

So with these realities about the Imago Dei the spiritual potential of humanity is immense. Image-bearers can hear God's word and ride it to untold spiritual heights. Image-bearers are innately regal beings meant to rule over all creation.

Image-bearers are the created offspring of God, with real possibilities of eternal sonship.

We see man as the apex of a fully formed and filled creation made by God for him. Man and woman are glorious indeed. There they stood before the fall—vicegerents of creation in a state of spiritual, social, and ecological perfection. God had given every seed-bearing plant and fruit-bearing tree for food (cf. vv. 29, 30). They were at peace with God and nature. “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was “evening and there was morning, the sixth day” (v. 31). But as we know, the fall did come. No category can adequately express the tragedy. Mankind remains in the image of God, but as a shadow of himself.

Where is our hope? It is in Christ who is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15). He is the exact image of God’s being (cf. Hebrews 1:3). Jesus’ incarnation resulted in a formal correspondence with the first Adam by virtue of his humanity. But Christ, the second Adam, did not sin. So he can make all those who are in him alive (cf. Romans 5:12ff.).

What awaits the Christian is the likeness (Greek *eikon*, image) of Christ: “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 Corinthians 15:49). ***The destiny of believers in Christ is to be in his image, and this includes everything that was suggested in our being created in God’s image.*** We will rule in and with Jesus, whom the writer of Hebrews shows is the one who fulfilled Psalm 8:

“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone” (2:9).

Again, all our hope rests on Jesus, the perfect bearer of the “Imago Dei” (image of God). Note well that Colossians 1:15 (“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation”) is followed by verses 16-18, which depict him as the Creator, Sustainer, and Goal of the universe!

As he was the one who formed the universe, God can and does restore form to broken lives. And more, he who filled the earth with light, the seas with fish, the air with birds, and the land with its denizens specializes in giving his righteousness to sinful, vacuous humanity. He only has to say the word, and it is done.”

Excerpt From: R. Kent Hughes. “Genesis.”

Appendix...Blake Long on “Abortion and the Image of God” (Excerpts)

January 25, 2021

“If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house, then in a field...it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light.” John Calvin

Abortion is the pre-meditated killing of an unborn child. In other words, it is murder.

I thought I'd put my cards on the table before I began this post. My attempt is not to be controversial, but at the very same time I am not going to shy away from writing about things that are controversial when I feel led to do so.

Though abortion is arguably the most contentious political issue of our day — are you pro-life or pro-choice? — ***I need you, the reader, to understand something: regardless of what you believe, abortion is not ultimately a political issue, but a theological issue.***

Abortion is a theological issue because it deals with the imago Dei — the image of God. The image of God is the doctrine in Christianity that teaches all humans — regardless of location, development, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. — possess inherent value, worth, and dignity. Moreover, all humans possess this because we are created by God, according to His image. And it was good.

Now, let's talk about abortion more in light of what it means to be made in the image of God. Why is abortion such a heinous sin? Because it literally rips people (in some circumstances) apart who are made in God's image. It slaughters the image Dei. My goal in this post is to not convince you why abortion should be illegal. In this post, I want to show you why Christians take it so seriously: because it kills the image of God.

Psalm 139

The Bible teaches that God “formed [our] inward parts,” and that He “knitted [us] together in [our] mother's womb” (v. 13). Even more, it proclaims that all people are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (v. 14). Additionally, this Psalm teaches that our frame was not hidden from Him (v. 15) and that He saw our unformed substance (v. 16).

In other words, Scripture is very clear that what is inside a mother's womb is a tiny human being just like us. Does the baby need to develop? Yes. Is the baby dependent on the mother for survival? Yes, up to a certain point of gestation. Is the baby inside the mother's body? Yes, but the baby also has his or her own DNA—in other words, it's own body.

The Bible is explicit in saying that life begins at conception. If you are not convinced of that reality by what Scripture teaches in Psalm 139 and other places, then look at science. Science tells us, inarguably, that life begins at conception. Many claim to be people that “believe science,” yet have no regard for the science behind when life begins.

“When it comes to abortion, everyone knows what’s happening — all the world knows,” John Piper once said. “We are killing children. Pro-choice and pro-life people all know this. Sinful hardness of heart, not innocent ignorance, lies at the root of this carnage.”

At this point in human history, it's hard to take anybody seriously when they say what is inside the mother's womb is not a human life. It is unmistakable. It is a human. A person may have misconceptions or something like that — in that case, we educate them — but for the most part, society knows.

<https://theology-and-life.com/2021/01/25/abortion-and-the-image-of-god/>

Appendix...Creation and God's Glory

Whether it is in the beauty, power, or complexity of creation, a taste of God's wonder is engraved on all things as an unmistakable testament of His incomprehensible glory. The glory of God has been disclosed in the whole workmanship of the universe: “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1) and “the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3).

There are two helpful ways to express the presentation of God's glory in creation. First, His glory is like a brilliant light shed abroad—even to the darkest reaches of the earth. This flashing light penetrates all men's minds (Rom. 1:19–20). It radiates richly throughout all the heavens, where the Lord's majesty is shed forth (Ps. 104:2). There is no place where the sparks of His glory cannot be discerned. Second, the glory of God is revealed in creation like an image in a mirror. The glory of the invisible God is reflected visibly by His creation (Heb. 11:3). This allows all to gaze upon the invisible nature of God, as portrayed in His creation. Whether God's glory appears like a light or like an image in a mirror, truly men cannot open their eyes without being compelled to see Him.

Though God's whole creation displays His glory, it is man himself, as the pinnacle of creation, who reveals God's glory most explicitly. He is a rare spectacle of God's power, goodness, and wisdom. Infants have tongues so eloquent to preach God's glory that there is no need at all for other orators (cf. Ps. 8:2). The human body—from its mouth and eyes to its very toenails—exhibits exquisite workmanship. Man's soul, in intelligence, imagination, memory, and even in dreaming, speaks of his Creator. The image of God has been so fully stamped upon men that, as all are adorned with an air of His glory, God readily testifies that He is the Father of all (Acts 17:28). God has made man His masterpiece, surpassing all else in creation. Further, as the church is conformed to the express image of the invisible God, Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3), the glory of God becomes more distinct.

For the unbeliever, the expression of God in creation cannot be missed, even if the darkness of his mind causes the image to appear clouded. For him, the glory of God displayed in creation is a testimony against unbelief (Rom. 1:19–20). In addition to the inward witness of the heart, God has provided innumerable evidences in the world of His existence and of man's duty to submit to his Creator (cf. Acts 14:16–17). The glory of God is inscribed in creation with bold letters, yet the unbeliever has exchanged the glory of the incorruptible for images of corruptible things (Rom. 1:23). This confusion of the creation with the Creator supplants the true God with a shadow deity, depriving God of His right as Creator and denying creation's proper place as an announcement of the glories of its Maker. Though God sweetly attracts men with semblances of His glory, man's rashness and superficiality, joined with ignorance and darkness, have led to disdain for creation's testimony and, ultimately, to a rejection of the Creator Himself.

For the believer, the beauty of creation speaks of the majestic beauty of his God. With Scripture's revelation and the Spirit's work, the believer is able rightly to understand and appreciate the glory of God displayed in creation. He hears God's awesome voice upon the waters, breaking the cedars, shaking the wilderness, and causing new birth; thus, the believer worships the Lord in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 29). Examining creation brings him to praise and submit to his sovereign Creator—who sustains the mass of heaven and earth by His Word. God's nod alone shakes the heavens with thunderbolts; kindles the air with flashes; disturbs the earth with storms, and then silences them; and compels the sea to hang as though in midair, only to make it calm again. All of this incites reverential awe and adoration in the heart of every believer for the glorious God heralded by creation.

Adapted from John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.5.1–3, 13–14; 1.6.14
Courtesy of Joel Beeke and Michael Barrett