

In the Beginning...

An Examination of the Genesis Account of Creation and the Fall of Mankind

Genesis 1:26-31

11- The "Days" of Creation, Day 6- Part 2

March 25, 2018

Genesis 1:26-31

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

29 Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;

30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food"; and it was so.

31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

To the Glory of God

Now the single most insulting Truth that narcissistic humans could be told is that God is the most beautiful, the most lovely, the wisest, the best, the highest, the most important, and the most glorious Being in the Universe. So, *nothing* is like God. The Beauty and Magnificence of our glorious God is *the* single most vital Realty in all of Creation. Nothing else even comes close.

And, in spite of the dribble that comes from many pulpits today that seeks to feed the supposed "needs" of broken and sinful humans so that *they* could be the primary focus of all that God is thinking and doing, God has a white-hot Passion (that *dominates* everything He says and does), that *He alone* should be central, and that we would find the fullness of our Joy in Him being glorified.

And so, we are *not* the focus of God in the Universe. The focus of God in the Universe is God. And so, all that God has created and all that He has spoken and all that He has done is to that one single end, that God would so transform rebellious creatures of dirt, by what He alone has done for them, that they would behold in the infinite Value of God and His Glory, and truly delight themselves in what they see.

And *that* is why God made Man. And in order for Man to exist, there must be rivers and mountains and super-novas and sub-atomic particles. So, all of the *inanimate* parts of Creation exist only to "house" and "sustain" human beings until all of those chosen for this "Grand Design" could be saved. And that is *exactly* what God revealed to the Apostle Paul in **Ephesians 1:3-6**:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Now please take notice of two phrases in that Passage:

1. ... **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world ...**
2. **In love He predestined us to adoption ...**

Now *both* of those phrases have to do with what God did, all by Himself, in what we call "Eternity Past". And Eternity Past is defined by that first phrase:

... before the foundation of the world

So, the Apostle Paul was “moved along” by God the Holy Spirit to teach that *before* God made the world, which is the time frame that we are studying called “Creation”, God “set His Love” upon unworthy sinners to do three things with them:

1. Forgive them (make them blameless)
2. Make them holy
3. Adopt them into His Family

... which is simply another way of talking about Salvation. And then Paul groups all three of these marvelous, sovereign Acts *together* and calls them:

Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ

And then Paul went on to say that God did all three of these marvelous Acts by virtue of two things, inherent in Himself:

- 1. In love**
- 2. according to the kind intention of His will**

And then Paul was “moved along” to say that God did all of this so that one glorious thing would be accomplished:

To the praise of the glory of His grace

In other words, God chose and predestinated fallen sinners to be saved so that the great Importance and infinite Worth of God and His Grace could be:

- ✓ **Displayed/Shown** (by what God alone did in saving unworthy rebels)
- ✓ **Seen/Understood** (by the creatures that God made)
- ✓ **Appreciated/Marveled** at by the world

... all to one end, that God alone would receive what He alone has *earned*, Praise! And the Bible reveals that God decided to do this before

He made Man. And, for that matter, He did it before He ever created the world!

And that is why I told you in previous Sermons that what God is doing here on the 6th "Day", by creating Man "in His Image and in His Likeness", is the "Crown Jewel" of all that was made in this "Week" of Creation. And we can see this in the *unique* way in which God made Man. Please look again at **Genesis 1:26-27**:

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Now these verses, written by Moses, as God the Holy Spirit was "moving him along" some 1,450 years before Jesus was born, is simply an "Initial Statement" of God making Man. The details of just *how* God did this are given to us in **Genesis 2:4-7**:

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven.

5 Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.

6 But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.

7 Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Now last week, I told you that there isn't any *overt* reason to believe that animals will be in Heaven. But the flip-side, too, is that there is also no reason to believe that animals will be in Hell either. So, the two most *important* eternal issues, Heaven and Hell, will *not* be populated by *anything* that God made, except two:

1. The devil and his angels
2. Unrepentant human beings

Matthew 25:41

Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

Those who rebelled in Heaven against Him Who sits on the Throne, and those who persist in their rebellion on earth against the One Who lived and died and Who rose again will be thrown into the eternal fire of Hell. And that means that the constellation *Orion* will *not* magnify the Glory of God's Grace in Heaven, and Rin Tin Tin will *not* magnify the Glory of God's Justice in Hell. But we will.

Everything *else* that God made will be "un-created", in the same way that it was "created" in the first place. God will exercise His absolute Sovereignty, and will *supernaturally, miraculously, and powerfully* "end" the existence of the things that He made. They belong to Him, and they did *exactly* what He wanted them to do.

Psalm 19:1

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

The entire created Universe glorifies God. Their existence magnifies God's Power and His Wisdom and His Omnipotence, and in many ways brings Glory to God. But they *do not* and they *cannot* magnify the Glory of God's Grace or His Justice. That is reserved solely for Man.

And so, when the very last person, who has been chosen by God, from before the foundation of the world to be saved, is saved, God will end the existence of the other things that He made. And the Apostle Peter was used by God to reveal some information to us about that in **2 Peter 3:10**, when he said:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

... so, God will move in such a way that terrifying things will occur when He *unfolds* what He "created" in the beginning:

1. The Heavens will pass away with a roar.
2. The Elements will be destroyed with intense heat.
3. The Earth and its works will be burned up.

... and God doesn't need *anyone* or *anything* else to help Him to stop all things anymore than He needed some natural or evolutionary process to help Him get everything started in the first place. So, I don't see nuclear holocausts or meteorites or man-made global warming in this verse. I see that God is going to *stop* everything, all by Himself, just like He *began* everything.

And this tells me that human beings are the "crown jewel" of all of God's Creation, because, we are the *only ones* who can magnify the Glory of either God's Grace or God's Justice. And because that is true, the Apostle asked us a very important question in the very next verse:

2 Peter 3:11

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness

So, human beings will live forever (somewhere). And everything *else* that God made has got a "shelf-life" to it, and will exist only as long as the primary reason for its creation exists. And what is the "primary reason" for all things to exist? All of Creation (except human beings) exists to help or to assist or to make it possible for human beings to live and either magnify the Glory of God's Grace or magnify the Glory of God's Justice.

Now many, in the modern church, believe and teach that God made us because He was lonely and wanted a family. And I am telling you that this is not only wrong, it is blasphemy.

When you even just try to imagine what it was like when there was nothing but God, how infinitely happy God the Father was, how joyful He was, to see all the immaculate Perfections radiating back to Him from God the Son, how content He was to see exquisite Power flowing from God the Spirit, it literally takes your breath away. Before God made the galaxies and the molecules, and before He created Light and Darkness, there was only perfect Joy, perfect Contentment, perfect Righteousness, perfect Holiness, perfect Wisdom, perfect Unity, and perfect Love.

God had need of nothing, and was certainly not, as so many say, experiencing anything remotely close to loneliness. God was enjoying the vastness and the multitude of the perfections of the triune God. And yet, God created the Universe and the seas and the dry land. And God made the birds and fish and the land animals. And now, here in verses 26-31, we see God engaging in the "crown jewel" of all Creation, Man.

So, why do I refer to Man as being the "crown jewel" of God's Creation? As you know, in this Series, I have put forth the concept that the sovereign Creation of the Universe was of a secondary purpose. The primary Purpose as to why God engaged in Creation was two- fold:

1. So that the Glory of God's Grace could be displayed and seen and marveled at, as God forgives, redeems, and makes righteous wicked, undeserving rebels by what God alone does for them.
2. So that the Glory of God's Justice could be displayed, seen, and marveled at, as God forever damns unrepentant rebels, who voluntarily and repeatedly, devalued and spurned the Grace of God.

And the Apostle Paul talked about this in his masterpiece called "The Epistle to the Romans", which in my estimation is the greatest Letter ever written. Please look at **Romans 9:18**:

So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Now **Romans 9** contains some of the *deepest* and most *profound* Teaching in the Bible, which is why so many people just skip over it. But I want you to follow along with what the Apostle writes infallibly here. Verse 18 is the "Summary Statement" of all that the Apostle has been teaching since verse 1 about "Sovereign Election", the concept that describes how God receives all the Glory for Salvation and how Man receives none.

And Sovereign Election is hard to teach and hard to learn and hard to comprehend. But it is in the Bible, and that makes it to be true, and that is why I believe and teach it. So, suffice it to say that Paul is talking about why some people are saved and why others are not. And

verse 18 gives us that Summary Statement that says that God is absolutely Sovereign, even in Salvation.

But now look at how people objected to what Paul was teaching about Sovereign Election back in the 1st Century in verse 19:

You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

Now this is a very important Question because it *proves* that Paul was, in fact, teaching about Sovereign Election from verses 1-17. No one objects like this to the "gospel" that most people preach today. The idea that God loves *everybody* the "same", and that Jesus died on the Cross to give *everyone* an "opportunity" to be saved, *as long as they take God up on His free gift of Salvation*, doesn't offend *anyone*. That "gospel" appears to be very fair, and it is easy to teach, easy to learn, and easy to comprehend. The only problem with that 'gospel" is that it isn't in the Bible. It is a manufactured "gospel".

The very fact that the Question of verse 19 is being asked tells us that the Theology that Paul has been teaching from verses 1-17 of **Romans 9**, and that he *summarized* in verse 18, didn't sit well with the people back then any more than it sits well with people today.

And so, they ask, "*But, Brother Paul, if what you have been teaching is true, and no one can be saved unless God chooses him to be saved, and graciously overcomes his natural resistance to being saved, then why does God damn anyone?*" Now look at how Paul answers their question:

Romans 9:20-21

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Now notice that Paul does *not* argue here about whether God does this or not. Paul is *not* debating whether God saves some and hardens others. That is *not* how Paul answers this Question. The Apostle has spent 17 verses telling his readers that, manifestly, God absolutely *does*

do that. God absolutely does hardens some and softens others. Paul answers their Question by asking *another* Question:

Does God have the *"Right"* to do this?

Is it *okay* that God does this? Does God have the inherent "Right" or "Authority" as God to do this? Does doing this make God to be "unjust"? Does God hardening some and softening others make God to be a monster? In other words, is it okay with us if God operates in His Universe as though He owns it? That is what Paul is asking in verses 20-21. But look closely again at verse 21:

Does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

When God created man, He created him from the dust of the earth. So, Paul's argument about Salvation in **Romans 9** ties in what Moses wrote about Creation in **Genesis**. And, in **Romans 9**, Paul again illustrates the primary purpose for Creation:

Creation was carried out to serve God's primary Passion, to display either the
Glory of His Grace (in saving unworthy sinners)
or the Glory of His Justice (in damning unrepentant rebels)

... and that is a radical concept. And, in many ways, it is a frightening concept. But I believe it with all my heart. And my entire Ministry is based on this concept being true. And that is just peachy-keen, but does the Bible teach it? Simply because I passionately and completely believe in something doesn't make it to be true. It is only true if God's infallible Word teaches it. So, do the sacred Scriptures teach this concept? Well, I'm so glad you asked. Yes, it does.

1) God created us for His Glory

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Nowhere in the Bible is anything that God made ever called “a living *being*”, except when God made Man. So, we are *more* than a “living *creature*”. We are that, we have been graciously given the gift of life, and we are a creature of the Creator. But we are much *more* than that. Unlike fish and birds and cattle, Man was made “**in Our image, according to Our likeness**”. Now, earlier in this Sermon Series, I preached an entire Sermon on the uniqueness of how Man was created, so I’m not going to repeat that here except to say that we can understand this uniqueness in two main ways:

1. Man has dominion over the rest of God’s Creation.
2. Man is able to know God, to love God, and to enjoy God forever.

... and this goes back to the Reality that, unlike anything else in God’s Creation, Man is able to *magnify* the Glory of God’s Grace by being the *recipients* of it.

Isaiah 43:6-7

6 "I will say to the north, 'Give *them* up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold *them* back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth,
7 Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Unlike any other part of God’s Creation, God made all of us in “His Own Image” so that we would *image forth*, or *reflect*, the pristine Character and moral Beauty of God. That is why we were made. It is the primary reason any of us exists. It is why our heart beats and why we suck air into our lungs.

Nothing else even comes close to explain why a God, Who has need of nothing, created frail, fallible human beings, who mostly sin and who mostly rebel, and who mostly fail to obey.

2) Therefore, every human should live for God’s Glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

And there are really only five ways that human beings can live for the Glory of God:

1. We must love God (**Matthew 22:37**)
2. We must trust God (**Romans 4:20**)
3. We must be thankful to God (**Psalms 50:23**)
4. We must obey God (**Matthew 5:16**)
5. We must treasure God above all things- even our own lives (**Philippians 3:8; Matthew 10:37**)

... this is what we were created to do. Therefore, when we do these things (because we have already been saved), we are fulfilling our "created destiny". And so, magnifying the greatness of God brings us into the fullness of Joy.

3) We have all sinned, and in our sin, we have devalued God's Glory.

But, sin stops those five things from being true in us. And that is *why* the Apostle connected our sin to the Glory of God, when he said:

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

.. but it is much worse than simply "falling short". In our "fallen state", we have unwisely *exchanged* the magnificence of God's Glory for created trinkets, man-made idols, and crawling creatures.

Romans 1:21-23

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Our sins rob God of the Glory that He is *entitled* to. They make God to look *less* valuable and *less* important than He really is. Because,

in this unholy "exchange", we turn to those things rather than to God for Joy and Peace and Comfort and Satisfaction. And therefore, sin also robs *us* of the unimaginable Joy that God, being glorified, would bring to us.

And this goes way beyond human decision or human intellect. It is patently stupid for any created thing to rebel against its Creator. It is the very definition of suicide. 6,000 years of human existence tells us that we will always lose that fight. And yet, that is the "default setting" of all Mankind, in their natural state? Why? If not glorifying God is so dishonoring to God and so ruinous to us, why do we do it?

In the Fall, the *natural* and *normal* affections for God that Adam had were destroyed. We do not merely "do" dark things, we *love* the darkness.

John 3:19-20

19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

20 "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Our affections for God were not merely "impaired" in the Fall, they were categorically *destroyed*. So, to those born after the Fall, it is now *neither* "normal" *nor* "natural" for *anyone* to love God or serve Him gladly. And there is *nothing* inherent within any of us that we can capitalize on that would suddenly change that. No act of our will, no choice, no decision. Therefore, in our lost condition, we *cannot* love God, because we don't *want* to.

Romans 8:6-8

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

4) Therefore, we all deserve Eternal Punishment.

Being "fallen" is much worse than simply being *separated* from God. Our problem is not fully understood by measuring our distance from God. As fallen souls, we are now actively and energetically engaging in high treason against our Maker. By our open rebellion and through our willingness to set our affections on things (anything) that are passing way rather than the most glorious Being in the Universe, we insult God to His Face. We have the audacity to seek to *ignore* the Owner and Creator of the Universe. We have the unmitigated gaul to try to be happy and content without God's Permission or Blessings.

We desire to live in a Universe (that we did not create), breath air (that we did not make), with life (that is borrowed), forging our *own* way, utilizing our *own* morality, doing what is right in our *own* eyes, with little or no regard for the God Who spoke it all into existence.

And our rebellion has ignited the indescribable Fury of an Omnipotent God Who *refuses* to be ignored or belittled or set aside or devalued by creatures from the dirt. God is determined to vindicate the Value of His Glory that has been devalued by our treason. So, we have not merely sinned. We have not merely engaged in an unholy exchange. We have earned Damnation. We *deserve* God's Wrath. We have worked hard to rebel against Him. We've put a lot of thought into our ongoing rebellion and carried it out with glee. We have shaken our fist into the Face of the Owner and Creator of the Universe, and *dared* Him to respond. And so, He has.

In **Romans 6:23**, the Apostle verified that Eternal Death is the just "payment" for the "labor" of our sins when he said:

For the wages of sin is death...

Paul also wrote infallibly, in **2 Thessalonians 1:9**, that those who found their primary delight in created things rather than in Jesus Christ....

... will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

.. and the Lord Christ Himself told us in **Matthew 25:46** that Hell is *not* a place to convert anyone, but a place to issue out "Divine Retribution", when He said:

These will go away into eternal punishment...

But as frightening as Hell is, we must understand that if God did not powerfully and eternally damn the unrepentant, then He would be agreeing with them that His Glory was not worth defending.

One of the ways that we can determine the value of something is to look at the harshness of the penalty that is imposed on those who violate it. For example, we kill people in this country who take human life (murder). And that is the harshest and the absolute *worst* thing we can do to them. And by imposing such a horrendous penalty, we manifest the great value that we have placed on life.

Nothing means more to God than His Glory. It is the primary motivation as to *why* He does what He does. And one of the ways that God has manifested the Value that He places on His Glory is in the harshness of the Penalty against those who diminish it through their sin. So, the displaying of God's Justice, in eternally damning the unrepentant, brings Glory to God in that it signifies how important God's Glory is to God.

And God *could* have left it at that. He would be absolutely glorious in eternally damning us all, precisely because we have all belittled (fallen short) His Glory with our sin. But thanks be to God, not only does God desire to display the Glory of His Justice, He also desires to display the Glory of His Grace.

5) In His great Mercy, God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to provide a way for the Glory of His Grace to be displayed and marveled at by forgiving and making Righteous wicked sinners.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God ...

6) Therefore, God giving Eternal Life to patently unworthy sinners, by what He alone does for them, magnifies the Glory of God's Grace more than anything else.

Therefore, when wicked rebels are so radically transformed (by what God Himself has done) that we now struggle *against* the lusts of our flesh, by/through the Power of the Holy Spirit, to find their delight in God being magnified above all else, the infinite Worth and Value of God is magnified, and we are "imaging forth" the Glory of God.

And only born-again people can do that. Lost people do not have the privilege of glorifying God.

Romans 8:6-8

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

So, part of what it means to be "born-again" is that God has sovereignly and mercifully opened your eyes, and you are now able to see/ behold the infinite Beauty of God in/by/through Jesus Christ. And because you have been blessed with the ability to see, God gives you both the desire and the power to glorify this beautiful God. And it is through glorifying God that reborn human beings come into the very fullness of Joy!

And so, I suggest to you that the reason that God made Man is so that either the Glory of God's Justice or the Glory of God's Grace could be displayed upon them. And when the radiance of God's pristine Holiness is displayed on unrepentant sinners by *damning* them, God's Justice is glorified.

But when sinful people are radically transformed to the degree that they behold God's Glory, manifested in Jesus Christ, and they truly love what they see, God's marvelous, amazing Grace is magnified more than through anything else in all of Creation. And *that* is why God made Man.

Amen. Let's pray.

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