

# The Creation of the Universe

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## Introduction

Every religion, worldview or philosophy has a viewpoint regarding how the world and universe came into being. One's view of the origin or source of things is crucial because one's belief regarding the why and how of the source of all things will affect one's whole view of reality, ethics, meaning and ultimate concerns. Given this fact, we should not be surprised that the first words of the Bible are a revelation from God regarding the creation of the world: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). It is noteworthy that the gospel of John, the most theologically oriented of the New Testament gospels, begins with the teaching that Jesus Christ is the creator of all things: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3). That creation was the work of Christ, no less than of God the Father, is a central credential of Jesus' sovereign power to save sinners.

The biblical teaching regarding God's creation of the universe out of nothing is the starting point of true religion and all true science, for it reveals to us the distinction between the Creator and the creature. It tells us that there can be no existence apart from God. Since God is the source of all things, then everything is not only dependent upon His being but is also subject to His authority. He is the determiner, lawgiver, ruler and judge of mankind. Consequently, the ancient church regarded the biblical teaching on creation as a fundamental article of the Christian faith. The first article of the Apostle's Creed says, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." Our understanding of creation is crucial, for without a proper understanding of this doctrine we will not be able to properly understand other key doctrines. The biblical doctrine of creation is unique and separates Christianity from all other religions and worldviews.

A study of creation is particularly important in our own day because the chief modern argument against the authority of Scripture and Christianity is based on modern secular concepts of science as it relates to the origins of the universe and mankind. To properly discuss the debate surrounding origins between a naturalistic scientist and a Bible-believing Christian, one must understand the presuppositions that underlie everyone's view of the universe. Everyone has a worldview and certain presuppositions, whether they are aware of it or not. No one approaches the evidence, or the Bible, with a completely neutral mind. The genuine Christian views Genesis as part of the sacred Scriptures and by faith accepts Paul's teaching that "all Scripture is inspired of God or God breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is not some fallible, man-made ancient history book or a collection of ancient myths; it rather is breathed out by God Himself and thus is

infallible and inerrant, or without error, in matters relating not only to doctrine and ethics but also to history and science. One cannot arrive at the truth regarding the origin of the universe without faith. The author of Hebrews notes, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3).

The atheistic scientist, however, presupposes that God does not exist and that no supernatural intervention is possible. Consequently, he is forced to view the universe as coming about through chance. He presupposes that true knowledge must come through autonomous reason, that meaning itself can only come about through man (who is the pinnacle of a chance cosmos), who processes and organizes the flux of matter around him. “Whatever possibility there is of any determination in the cosmos must then come from that cosmos.... If the origin of things is from within the cosmos, then, possibly, the control of all things can come from something within the cosmos. This faith leads to men playing God, to men attempting to control evolution, to a belief in a world state controlling all things, and to a religious belief in the powers of time and process.”<sup>1</sup> Thus we see that as we study origins it is not simply a case of my facts versus your facts, but the faith commitments and presupposition behind one’s analysis of the evidence. The macro-evolutionist cannot comprehend the truth about origins because his presuppositions and atheistic faith commitments disallow all the amazing proofs for supernatural creation.

Before we look at the text of Genesis 1:1 and following, there are a few important introductory matters to consider. First, given our commitment to the inspiration and authority of Scripture, we must reject all modernist and unbelieving theories regarding the early chapters of Genesis. It is popular in religiously liberal circles to describe the early narratives in Genesis as mythology; as fictitious narratives or invented stories designed to teach a theological lesson. In other words, they are not true historically and were never intended to be taken in a literal, historical manner. The reason why such views are popular among scholars today is that most modern scholars have accepted as fact modern, supposedly scientific, views on the age of the universe and macro-evolution. The authors of Genesis we are told, were ignorant and their writings reflect a prescientific or nonscientific worldview.

The modernist understanding of the early chapters of Genesis as myth must be rejected for the following reasons. (1) Even if a myth could express a true lesson or message, myths by definition are not true because they never really happened. They belong to the realm of human fantasy, not divine revelation. The authors of the New Testament unequivocally condemn myths as false, wrong and dangerous. They boldly declare that the biblical message does not belong to the realm of myth. Paul told Timothy to reject myths or fables as useless (1 Tim. 1:4). He warned Timothy that a time would come when men would turn away from the truth in order to embrace myths (2 Tim. 4:4). The apostle told Titus to sharply rebuke those who were paying attention to Jewish myths because such things were a departure from the truth (Tit. 1:14). Peter told the recipients of this letter that their faith rested on a sure foundation because the apostles did not follow clever myth (2 Pet. 1:16). They were, rather, eyewitnesses of Christ’s majesty. In

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<sup>1</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *Genesis* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2002), 4.

addition, they had a more sure word of prophecy because prophecy does not originate in man's will "but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). To argue that the creation narrative or the account of Noah's ark is a myth is to argue that Scripture is false. Such a view is totally destructive of true faith and piety because biblical faith is the belief or trust that what divine revelation says is true.

(2) The inspired authors of the New Testament and Jesus Christ Himself assumed that the creation narrative was literal, genuine history and not myth or poetic metaphor. Christ based His teaching on marriage and divorce on a literal Adam and Eve (cf. Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-8; see Gen. 1:27; 2:24). Paul based his teaching on original sin and covenant headship on a literal Adam—the first man in history (cf. Rom. 5:12-27). The reality of man's condition and need of salvation is a result of a real fall in history, not a myth. He appeals to Adam, or our first parents, for his teaching on head coverings (1 Cor. 11:8-9), women's role in the church (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-14) and the nature of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-22, 44-49). Hodge notes the importance of the inspired author's appeal to the creation narrative: "In this way does the New Testament constantly authenticate, not merely the moral and religious truths of the Old Testament, but its historical facts; and makes those facts the grounds or proofs of great moral principles. It is impossible, therefore, for any Christian who believes in the inspiration of the apostles to doubt the divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, or to confine the inspiration of the ancient writers to their doctrinal and preceptive statements. The whole Bible is the word of God."<sup>2</sup>

Second, it is also important to recognize that the early chapters of Genesis are not poetry, but rather plain factual statements. There has been an effort on the part of some Reformed and evangelical thinkers to accommodate the findings of modern science by developing theories that allow the interpreter to reject the creation narrative as a straightforward account of what happened. This practice raises the question: is there any evidence that Genesis 1 is poetry? Although Genesis 1 is very structured and contains a beautiful, highly stylized narrative, it does not meet the criteria of Hebrew poetry. E. J. Young's comments on Genesis 1 as poetry are excellent:

If you acted thus with Genesis you are not facing up to the facts, and that is a cowardly thing for Evangelicals to do. Genesis is not poetry. There are poetical accounts of creation in the Bible—Psalm 104, and certain chapters in Job— and they differ completely from the first chapter of Genesis. Hebrew poetry had certain characteristics, and they are not found in the first chapter of Genesis. So the claim that Genesis 1 is poetry is no solution to the question. The man who says, "I believe that Genesis purports to be a historical account, but I do not believe that account," is a far better interpreter of the Bible than the man who says, "I believe that Genesis is profoundly true, but it is poetry." That latter has nothing to commend it at all. I disagree with the first man, but he is a better exegete, he is a better interpreter, because he is facing up to the facts. So I conclude that Evangelicals who want to hold to evolution as the unbeliever holds to it,

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Hodge, *I & II Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1974 [1857, 59]), 20.

and to get over the difficulties by saying that Genesis is to be interpreted as poetry or myth and not in a factual manner, cannot in my view, be honest interpreters.<sup>3</sup>

What Young says could be applied to the framework hypothesis, a theory developed in the Netherlands in the 1950s and popularized in America by Old Testament scholar Meredith Kline. According to this theory, the first two chapters of Genesis were never intended to be taken literally by the author, but were set forth as a *literary device*. According to this view, the author is not interested in the length of time used to create the universe or even in how God created the world. He uses a literary device to show that creation is divided into three separate spheres each with its own rules. “In essence, the framework view asserts that the creation ‘week’ of Genesis 1:1-2:3 is a literary framework intended to present God’s creative activity in a topical, non-sequential manner, rather than a literal, sequential one.”<sup>4</sup> This bizarre theory, like the concepts of Genesis 1 and 2 as myth or poetic metaphor, is intended to harmonize the text of Scripture with the findings of modern science. It is an attempt to subjugate Scripture to the *unbiblical* and *unscientific* theories of modern secular humanistic scholars. It is a sellout to the spirit of the world. It is an assault on the authority of Scripture and is a denial of standard Protestant methods of interpretation. If we cannot take Scripture literally—at face value—when it is intended to be taken literally, then we have surrendered the glorious doctrine of creation for the unbelieving fantasies of this world. Those who compromise the clear teachings of Scripture to harmonize an interpretation with modern science have replaced faith in the text of Scripture with faith in the findings of unregenerate autonomous man.

## Creation Out of Nothing

The Bible begins with the teaching that God created the universe out of nothing, or without the use of pre-existing materials: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). This verse begins the first section of Genesis (1:1-2:3) and introduces us to God and His creation, which is the stage for the fall and the whole drama of redemption through Christ. The first words of Scripture purposely lift our hearts on high to God in all His power, sovereignty, wisdom and transcendence. It is clear from the very first words of the Bible that the Holy Scripture is a revelation from God. God the Creator reveals His first action in history that no one but God Himself has seen. We have a simple statement of fact with no explanation. “This is the first reality we must recognize and acknowledge, that God is Creator and that everything that exists, in all its diversity and multiformity, with all its power to amaze and enrapture us, exists only through an act of God which brought it into being.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> E. J. Young, *In the Beginning: Genesis 1-3 and the Authority of Scripture* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976), 18-19.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Robert V. McCabe, *A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Account (Part 1)*, [answersingenesis.org/.../Framework-interpretation-critique-pa...](http://answersingenesis.org/.../Framework-interpretation-critique-pa...)

<sup>5</sup> G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 1:52.

In order to avoid misunderstandings regarding verse 1, we need to see how it relates to the rest of the chapter. To do this we must consider two possible grammatical constructions of the verse and explain why we hold to the traditional interpretation. The traditional translation found in the KJV, NKJV, NASB and NIV takes verse one as the main clause which describes the first act of creation out of nothing. Verses 2 and 3 describe subsequent phases of God's creative activity. Another possible translation is "in the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth." This view is reflected in the RSV and NEB. This translation suggests that when God began to create, there was already the existence of chaos or preexistent matter.

The traditional translation based on verse 1 as an independent statement must be maintained for the following reasons. First, if verse 1 is not an independent description of creation out of nothing, then the doctrine of an absolute creation is not taught in the first chapter of Genesis. If pre-existing material was already in existence, then the word "create" in verse 1 can only refer to the molding or forming of things from an eternal preexistent matter. Such an interpretation would contradict the biblical doctrine of God, for only God is self-sufficient, truly independent, self-existent and eternal (see Jn. 5:26; Ps. 94:8ff; Isa. 40:18ff; Ac. 7:25, etc.). God is transcendent and uncreated while everything in creation exists only by His power and will. When God began to create the universe, nothing existed except God Himself. When we say nothing existed, we mean nothing in the most comprehensive sense of the word. There was no energy, or matter, or even time or even empty space. If one could travel backwards through time until one arrived at the beginning of Genesis 1:1, one could proceed no further. Beyond this beginning is nothing but God who inhabits eternity.

Second, the traditional translation is supported by the analogy of Scripture. In Psalm 33 we read, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.... For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (vs. 6, 9). "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (Jn. 1:3). "The doctrine of creation out of nothing is...explicitly set forth in John 1:3. The word commonly translated 'make' is not *poico* but it *ginomai*. It would be precisely correct to translate, 'everything came into existence through him, and without him nothing came into existence which is come into existence.' We are not claiming that the verb *ginomai* always means to come into existence out of nothing, but I should certainly contend that as this word is used in this sentence in this context, John is talking about things which come into being *ex nihilo*. He is very conscious of the first chapter of Genesis as this theological background, and he is relating the existence of the universe to Christ as the Logos."<sup>6</sup>

Paul confirms this teaching in Colossians 1:16 when he emphasizes that the pre-incarnate Son of God created *all things* that exist in the spiritual and material realm: "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." In Revelation 4:11 the twenty-four elders praise God saying, "For you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." Whatever exists in this universe exists because it was

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<sup>6</sup> James Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 1:136.

created by God. In Acts 4:24 the disciples declared, “You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them” (cf. Acts 14:15). Hebrews 11:3 says, “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” (NASB). If the universe came into being from that which is invisible, it could not be preexistent matter.

Third, the expression “the heavens and the earth” in this context is an idiom that refers to everything that exists. It is the ancient Hebrew way of saying “the whole universe.” This interpretation is confirmed by the repeated use of “all things” (*ta panta*, Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11) by the inspired authors when describing God’s creative activity. The authors of Scripture also frequently use enumerations or specifications of the various parts of creation to emphasize that *everything* in the universe is included (see Rev. 5:13; 10:6; Ac. 4:24; 5:13; 14:15; 17:24). Moreover, the expression “in the beginning” in this context can only refer to the first moment of creation when the first appearance of time, space and matter came into being. Wilhelmus a’ Brakel notes that this view is confirmed in Psalm 90:2:

“...before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hast formed the earth and the world.” Prior to the existence of the world there was a “before,” not in reality, but only when viewed from the perspective of the beginning of creation. In this “before” the world did not exist, but this “before” was eternity itself. “... Even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.” The world which did not exist was brought forth. That which has been brought forth, however, of necessity has no prior existence, but rather a beginning. This is confirmed by the use of the word “before” in other texts. “...before the foundation of the world...” (Ephesians 1:4); “...before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9). Both texts imply that there is a beginning of time and a beginning of the world. Consequently, the world has not existed eternally.<sup>7</sup>

To summarize some of the main points of Genesis 1:1 we should note the following: (1) The universe was created out of nothing by God. There was no preexistent matter or substance involved in Genesis 1:1. (2) The universe is not eternal. It came into being only when God willed it into being. (3) From the analogy of Scripture we learn that this creation was not necessary. “It was free to God to create or not to create, to create the universe as it is, or any other order and system of things, according to the good pleasure of his will.”<sup>8</sup> (4) The logical implication of this verse, which is supported by passages that speak of God’s nature and character, is that God is transcendent above His creation and that there are two completely separate and distinct kinds of being. There is God who is eternal, infinite, uncreated, self-sufficient and ontological. There also is created being, which is everything besides God. This being is created, dependent, finite and temporal.

It is noteworthy that this aspect of creation is emphasized in gospel preaching (Ac. 17:24) and Christian worship (Ps. 89:47; 90:2; 96:5; 102:25; 104), for it reminds us that God is the sovereign ruler of this universe and everything in it. If people believe that the first three chapters

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<sup>7</sup> Wilhelmus a’ Brakel, *The Christians Reasonable Service* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Pub., 1992), 1:266.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1:533.

of Genesis are myth and that we all evolved from pond scum, they will not accept the biblical teaching regarding who God is, the doctrine of sin and the necessity of redemption in Christ. The secular humanist historically has used macro-evolution as his supposed strongest weapon against the veracity of the Bible. Consequently, we must boldly proclaim creation out of nothing by the infinite personal God of Scripture as foundation to our proclamation of the cross of Christ.

Creation out of nothing also teaches us that we owe everything to God and that we are dependent on God for our existence and (after the fall) our salvation. It informs us that everything exists for God's glory; that only God is worthy to be worshiped and that it is a grievous sin to worship anything in the realm of creation. The fact that God created the universe out of nothing implies that God created this world for something significant and important. In the following verses this will become explicit with the dominion mandate, for the man is commanded to develop a God-honoring civilization and culture. All of this teaching is necessary as a background to the gospel, for Jesus' person and work of redemption is the only way in a fallen world to restore fellowship with God and to return to a community where people worship, honor and glorify God.

Without this doctrine of God creating all things out of nothing, there can be no genuine meaning or purpose for mankind. There can also be no transcendent absolute moral laws to govern men. Man, according to paganism and modern science, is nothing more than a product of matter and chance plus a great deal of time. The teaching of macro-evolution is akin to pagan concepts of magic. Without creation by an all-powerful God, human existence has no purpose or meaning except perhaps the perpetuation of the species. But in the long run this is also meaningless. Secular humanism holds to a worldview where man is his own god and meaning is sought through the manipulation of power from below. This meaning is arbitrary, statist and vicious but it is all the humanist has to offer.

## An Interpretation of Verse One

With our discussion of Genesis 1 as teaching creation out of nothing and its significance concluded, we will turn our attention to a verse by verse interpretation of this section.

The expression "in the beginning" is frequently used in Scripture to describe the beginning of a particular period, often the beginning of the reign of a king ("In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim" [Jer. 26:1; 27:1]; "In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah" [Jer. 28:1; 49:34]). The fact that verse 1 begins the account of creation and the starting point of world history justifies interpreting "in the beginning" in an absolute sense in this context. This verse marks the beginning of time, space, matter and energy. With all the ancient translations and the vast majority of conservative commentators, we view verse 1 as an independent main clause. Those who hold to the organization of preexistent matter must explain how God can be said to create the universe (v. 1) if the universe preexisted His creative activity. Verse 1 is God's first creative act, while verse 3 describes God's first creative word in creating and molding the universe and the earth to its final form as a home for mankind.

In the beginning God created. “The first subject of Genesis in the Bible is God” (Procksch, 438).<sup>9</sup> The word for God (*Elohim*) is in the plural. Although some have interpreted the plural as referring to a plural of majesty and power, the narrow (“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”; Genesis 2:26) and broader context of Scripture, points us to the fact that creation is an act of the triune God. The inspired writer does not attempt to prove the existence of God; he merely affirms it as a reality that must be believed. The fact that God is the creator of the whole universe implies the complete repudiation of heathenism—and their local, finite gods and goddesses—for God who power and authority over everything that exists. This one brief statement, understood biblically, refutes many of the false concepts of God that have existed throughout the ages. It clearly repudiates atheism, for it affirms the existence of God. It rejects materialism, for it marks a crystal clear distinction between the true God who has always existed and His material creation which had a beginning and could not exist without God’s creative power. The verse informs us that God is a personal being who thinks and acts, not an impersonal force or first cause. The creation was a free or voluntary act of a personal God, not a necessary or automatic act of an energy force. The text also teaches that God is all-powerful (omnipotence), for He could call into being the whole universe by divine fiat.

The first verse of the Bible teaches us that God must be the starting point and foundation of all true thinking and theology. God is the originator and initiator of all existence and, thus, to know anything truly we must think God’s thoughts after Him. All false religions and philosophies start *not* with the true and living God but with man as the measure of all things or with some aspect of creation. The universe around us or what is called general revelation gives us enough knowledge to condemn us, but not enough to bring us to a saving knowledge of Christ. The Bible is a book that tells us about the true and living God who exists, the God with whom we have to deal. It reveals his plan for mankind and, in particular, the story of redemption through Christ. As God is the initiator and originator of the original creation, we will learn in the following chapters that God is the originator and initiator of redemption. Christ is the author of the new creation. The soul that is regenerated by the Holy Spirit believes, repents and serves the Redeemer. But all this occurs because God sent his only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16); and in the beginning, God chose us in Christ (Eph. 1:4). We must remember that “we love him, because He first loved us” (1 Jn. 4:19).

The verb “he created” is only used in Scripture with God as the subject. While a purview of Scripture reveals that the verb is not used exclusively for creation out of nothing (e.g., God “created” Israel [Isa. 43:15], man [Gen. 1:27], sea monsters [Gen. 1:21]; mountains [Amos 4:13] and animals [Ps. 104:30], etc.), here it is clearly used for creation out of nothing. The word “create” in Hebrew (*bara*) is like our English word where there is an emphasis on an artist’s or engineer’s freedom and power in making something new. But here the creative power is pure, for pre-existing materials are not used. Thus, it must not be confused with words such as “make,” “form” and “manufacture.” God *formed* man from the dust of the ground and Eve from Adam’s side; but, He created the universe out of nothing at all. God gives existence to something that did

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<sup>9</sup> Procksch, as quoted in Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 14.

not previously exist so that it is not made, fashioned or formed from materials already in existence. The power and wisdom involved in this creation is obviously beyond human comprehension. Man can fashion a bowl out of wood, but only God can create the matter that makes the wood. The doctrine of creation out of nothing humbles man and brings him to his knees before God.

The expression “heavens and earth” (as noted) tells us that the object of God’s original creative work was the whole universe. The Hebrew language does not have a word for “universe” so when the writers of the Old Testament (and to a large extent the New Testament writers who followed the Old Testament way of speaking) designated everything that exists as, “the heavens [i.e. everything apart from the earth] and the earth” [the planet on which human life exists] (e.g., see Gen. 14:19, 22; Ex. 31:17; 2 Kgs. 19:15; 1 Chr. 29:11; 2 Chr. 2:12; Ps. 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; Jer. 23:24; 32:17; 51:48). Occasionally, the word “sea” is added (Ex. 20:11; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 69:34; 146:6). The expression “the heavens and the earth” in verse 1 does not refer to the present organized universe, but the original organized, non-finalized form described in verse 2. The universe suitable for mankind, as Adam and Eve knew it, is described as it comes into its final form in verses 3-31. Verse 1 gives us the whole substance that makes up the universe before God formed, made, ordered and organized the creation to its perfection. This process which took six days is described in the rest of the chapter.

## The State of the Universe after the Initial Creative Act of God

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (v. 2).

In verse 1 we have a description of God’s first act of creation. The space, time, energy and matter of the universe were called into being out of nothing. The earth itself exists but it is not ready for human life. “Verse two describes the earth as it came from the hands of the Creator and as it existed at the time when God commanded the light to shine forth.”<sup>10</sup> Before we carefully analyze this verse, there are a few important things regarding it that we need to keep in mind.

First, we must dispense with the idea that verse 2 describes the state of the earth *long after* the initial creation, after some sort of catastrophe occurred. According to this view, verse 3 to the end of the chapter does *not* describe God’s fashioning of the *original* primitive creation or the *original* forming work of the universe and planet earth; but, rather, describes a *restoration* of that which had fallen into ruins when Satan and a body of angelic hosts rebelled against God. Arthur W. Pink represents this view when he says,

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” and we cannot but believe that these creations were worthy of Himself, that they reflected the perfections of their

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<sup>10</sup> Edward J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964), 14.

Maker, that they were exceedingly fair in their pristine beauty. Certainly the earth, on the morning of its creation, must have been vastly different from its chaotic state as described in Genesis 1:2. “And the earth was *without form and void*” must refer to a condition of the earth much later than what is before us in the preceding verse. It is now over 100 years ago since Dr. Chalmers called attention to the fact that the word “was” in Genesis 1:2 should be translated “became,” and that between the first two verses of Genesis 1 some terrible catastrophe must have intervened. That this catastrophe may have been connected with the apostasy of Satan, seems more than likely; that some catastrophe did occur is certain from Isa. 45:18, which expressly declares that the earth was not created in the condition in which Genesis 1:2 views it.<sup>11</sup>

This interpretation became quite popular with fundamentalists, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who were looking for a Bible-believing conservative response to the findings of modern science. According to geologists and anthropologists, the earth was millions or even billions of years old. The fossil record, they argued, proved a very great prehistoric age full of dinosaurs and fantastic creatures that, long before man existed, passed away from the scene. By placing a large *indeterminate gap* between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, these professing Christians could account for the findings of modern science without, in their view, contradicting the Bible or denying the veracity of Scripture. They could take Genesis 1:3 onwards quite literally and could even teach that Adam was created only around 6,000 years ago. With one clever interpretation they dispensed with the findings of science and maintained biblical inerrancy.

While we respect the desire to answer the supposed findings of science while maintaining the integrity of Scripture, there are a number of reasons why the gap theory must be rejected as wrong and speculative. (1) The gap theory is essentially an argument from silence. It is not derived from the text but is read into or imposed on the text. This observation explains why it was invented in the 18th century *after* the rise in popularity of uniformitarianism and the theory of an ancient earth. Moreover, ask yourself: Would God completely pass over such an earth shattering catastrophe in silence when, in this context, He mentions a number of comparatively less important matters? It is a dangerous practice to speculate on supposed historical matters that God has chosen to ignore. (2) The gap theory cannot explain why a moral rebellion by angelic beings in heaven would bring a severe judgment and destruction upon a sinless pristine earth. There is not a shred of biblical evidence that God destroyed the earth in order to punish Satan for his sin. (3) The Bible explicitly teaches that sin and death came to planet earth as a consequence of the fall of Adam, the first man: “by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin” (Rom. 5:12). To argue that death, suffering and calamity existed on earth for a lengthy period prior to Adam’s fall not only explicitly contradicts Genesis 3 and Romans 5 but does not make any sense. Death is the result of the act of Adam, our federal head. It is not arbitrary. The gap theory has God ordaining death without sin. (4) The Bible speaks of the redemption of the elect and the restoration of the whole created order as a result of Christ’s person and work. This means that the calamitous effects of the sin of Adam upon himself, all mankind and planet earth will be

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<sup>11</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1922, 1950), 10.

perfectly remedied by Christ's redemptive work. Our Lord's salvific work, however, does not have any effect upon Satan and his demons. The obvious implication of this fact is that the curse upon the earth is only tied to Adam's fall, not Satan's fall. (5) The verb "it was," (*hayethah*) in Genesis 1:2 does not mean "became." Leupold notes that this verb "cannot bear the emphasis in a sentence where two such significant predicates follow (K.S. 326b). It must merely serve as a copula (K.S. 338 q). Consequently, all attempts to put into this verb some thought like: the earth then was there, or lay thus for quite a time, are grammatically quite impossible."<sup>12</sup> (6) The argument from Isaiah 45:18, which assumes that the description of the world in Genesis 1:2 is negative in some moral sense, is incorrect and must be rejected. The point of this verse, as we will see in a moment, is that the earth was not yet formed or fashioned into a place suitable for men.

As we end our discussion of the "gap theory" or the "restitution hypothesis," we should remind ourselves that modern scientists need to conduct their research and come to conclusions that are in harmony with the literal teaching of Genesis and not the other way around. The faith of the Christian rests upon the Word of God and is *not* to be founded *even partially* on the autonomous wisdom of men. Scripture is to be treated as inerrant and reliable on every area to which it speaks. We must regard it as an impregnable rock; as the source of all that we need to know regarding doctrine (including creation) and life. All those men, whether modernists or fundamentalists, who have abandoned the plain meaning of Scripture to satisfy modern scientific theories and intellectual fads will, in the end, be proved wrong. Scripture will always trump modern scientific theories because men often err but Scripture never makes mistakes.

Second, although verse 1 is focused on God's creation of the universe as a whole, the subsequent narrative centers our attention on the earth. Herman Hoeksema writes,

According to the word of God, the earth is the very center of the universe, around which all things are created and about which they all move. This is not to be conceived in a local and physical sense, for the earth is undoubtedly one of the smallest bodies that moves about in space. Besides, not the earth, but the sun is the center of the solar system. But all this does not affect the truth or the reality of the scriptural point of view.

Scripture does not measure the significance of the creature according to size, weight, or distance, as we are inclined to do, but according to its spiritual place in the universe. From that point of view, it is not difficult to understand that the earth is indeed considered the center of the cosmos: for the earth is destined to become the stage, not only for the dwelling place of man, the highest creature of God, but also and especially for the development of the covenant of God through the tremendous battle of sin and grace. On this Earth the Son of God in human nature is presently born. That incarnated Word of God is the head of God's creation, in whom all things in heaven and on earth are destined to become united. It is not strange, then, when the narrative of creation places us on this earth in order to show us from our earthly viewpoint how the Almighty created all things.

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<sup>12</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1942), 46.

For that reason the earth is presented in Genesis 1:2 as being already separated from the rest of the unformed world-matter. Scripture does not occupy our attention in detail with the formation of the things that are above, except that we are told that on the fourth day the Lord established the lights in the firmament; even then the viewpoint is entirely earthly. In Genesis 1 there is not even mention of the creation of the angels; still less are we given a glimpse of things in the highest heavens. But the formation of the earth and all that belongs to the earthly creation are described in detail.<sup>13</sup>

## An Interpretation of Verse Two

Verse 2 is a brief description of the earth as it stood before the creative activity of verse 3 and following. The verse contains three circumstantial clauses that describe a condition. “They do not contain action. ‘The earth *was* desolation and waste; darkness *was* of the face of the abyss; the spirit of God *was* hovering over the waters.’”<sup>14</sup> This verse speaks only about the earth, for it is the place where man lives and the drama of redemption will occur. We will consider each clause separately to carefully ascertain the meaning of each.

In the first statement we are told the earth was “without form and void.”<sup>15</sup> In order to understand what this means we must determine the proper translation of two Hebrew words: *tōhu wābāhu*. The King James translation “without form and void” gives the impression that these words are adjectives. Although beautiful, this translation is too general and esoteric. The word *tōhu* appears 20 times in the Old Testament. This noun, when describing something concrete like the ground or a geographical area, refers to a desert or uninhabited wasteland. “In Deut. 32:10 the word is used in parallel with ‘desert’ (*midbār*) and ‘wilderness’ (*yesimōn*). The word also designates ‘desert’ and Job 6:18, here a place of virtual death for any straying travelers. It is used to describe a deserted city and Isaiah 24:10. The same concept of vastness and emptiness is illustrated by Job 26:7, ‘He stretches the north over the void [*tōhu*], suspends the earth on nothing.... In sum, we observe that the nuance of *tohu* is brought out most clearly by words with

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<sup>13</sup> Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grandville, MI: Reformed Free Pub. Ass. , 2004), 1:259.

<sup>14</sup> E. J. Young, *In the Beginning*, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann, Jr. succinctly summarize the conclusions of lexicographers on these words: “Both *tohu* (‘formless’) and *bohu* (‘void’) occur only rarely in the Bible, and their meaning is, therefore, difficult to pinpoint. But the translation given above (similar to the KJV) is certainly possible. The Hebrew lexicon of Brown, Driver and Briggs gives ‘formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness’ for *tohu* and the smaller but more recent translation by Holladay of the Koehler and Baumgartner lexicon has ‘wasteland, nothingness, nonentity.’ For *bohu*, BDB gives ‘emptiness,’ while Holladay lists ‘void, waste.’

Many interpreters see the earth as already a solid planet at this point in the narrative, so they translate *tohu* and *bohu* as ‘waste and empty,’ meaning that the planet has its present shape and size, but that its surface is not yet fit for living creatures. Some interpreters go further, and suggest that the planet had been devastated by the judgment of God in conjunction with the fall of Satan.

On the other hand, the Jews who translated the book of Genesis into Greek more than two centuries before the time of Christ rendered these two words by *aoratos* (‘invisible’) and *akataskeuastos* (‘unprepared, unfurnished’) respectively. Although these translations may be periphrastic, the men who made them cannot be accused of attempting to harmonize Genesis with *modern science!*” (*Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* [Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1977], 70). This author believes the world was solid at this time and covered with water.

which it appears in parallel: desert, wilderness, wind, nothing, vanity.”<sup>16</sup> The point of this word in this context is that the land was a barren, lifeless, uninhabitable wasteland. Without one speck of animal or plant life, it was a sterile, unwelcoming place. At this point in time the earth was a great expanse of barrenness and emptiness. Before the creation of life, the surface of the earth was empty, lifeless, unformed and uninhabitable.

The second term *bōhu* is designed to say what the first word says in a different way. It reinforces *tōhu*. *Bōhu* is derived from a root meaning “to be empty.” It would apply to a geographical region without inhabitants of any kind. In Isaiah 34:11, it is translated “emptiness.” In Jeremiah 4:23, God uses both words to show the Jews that their sin would turn the land into an uninhabited wilderness.

The point of these words is not to say anything negative about the initial creation in a moral sense. They rather are designed to show us that the newly created world must undergo further creative changes before the planet is suitable for human life. It needs further organization; needs a great variety of plant life; and it needs to be inhabited with all sorts of animal life. Verse 2 describes the earth in an embryonic state.

We find another deficiency or incompleteness in the second statement: “darkness was on the face of the deep.” The word “deep” occurs 36 times in the Old Testament and refers to “deep waters.” The one and only primeval deep was lifeless, for above it was a complete and absolute darkness. The earth did not have any light as yet and life cannot exist without light. The original darkness created by God carried no negative ethical connotations. The point once again is that the earth is not complete, for it is uninhabitable. The fact that on the third day the waters are gathered into one place and dry land appears (Gen. 1:9) perhaps indicates at this time the whole earth was covered with water. On the third day oceans are formed and dry land appears. The earth at this time is a dark, watery wasteland. The entire earth was covered with the vast deep. All this existed in a shroud of absolute darkness. All the materials (except light) that are needed for a vibrant, beautiful planet full of life are present. But at this time they are waste waiting for God to speak His creative word. They need order, light and life before men takes center stage.

After describing the embryonic earth—which is a lifeless, unorganized, wasteland—the third clause hints that all this is about to change: “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Here is the first clear indication in the Bible of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. This verse leads into the days of creation and shows the presence and working of God. It completely disproves the idea that verse 2 describes the chaos brought about by rebellion in heaven. The Hebrew word for hovering is used of a bird in Deuteronomy 32:11. It refers to the action of a mother bird watching over her young. As a mother bird watches over her young as they begin to fly, the Holy Spirit hovers over the unorganized earth, for His active power is about to take this disordered world and fashion it into perfection and beauty. The Holy Spirit sustains the embryonic earth and powerfully organizes and changes it when God speaks a word of power. There are a number of passages that speak of the Holy Spirit as the originator of all life (e.g., Job 26:13; 27:3; Ps. 33:6; 104:30; 143:10; Isa. 34:16; 61:1; 63:11).

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<sup>16</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 109.

At this point we need to note that creation is the work of the triune God. Many Old Testament passages simply refer to the creative act as a work of God (e.g., Gen. 1:1; Ps. 96:5; Isa. 37:16; 44:24; 45:12; Jer. 10:11-12; etc.). Although in the Old Testament the doctrine of the trinity had not yet been fully revealed, there are clear indications that the Holy Spirit was active in the creative process. In Job 26:13 we read, “By His Spirit He adorned the heavens.” Elihu declared correctly, “The Spirit of God has made me” (Job 33:4). The psalmist writes, “You send forth Your Spirit, they are created” (Ps. 104:30; cf. Gen. 1:2; Isa. 40:12-13). In the New Testament the pre-incarnate Son’s role in creation is prominent. In the midst of pointing out the falsehood and foolishness of idolatry Paul writes, “There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live” (1 Cor. 8:6). In Colossians the apostle says, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created. . . . All things were created through Him and for Him” (1:15, 16). In Hebrews Paul exalts Christ saying, “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands” (1:10; cf. Ps. 102:25-27). Similarly John says, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (Jn. 1:3). Of the trinitarian work creation Berkhof writes, “The second and third persons are not dependent powers or mere intermediaries, but independent authors together with the Father. The work was not divided among the three persons, but the whole work, though from different aspects, is ascribed to each one of the three persons. All things are at once *out* of the Father, *through* the Son, and *in* the Holy Spirit. In general it may be said that *being* is out of the Father, thought or *idea* out of the Son, and *life* out of the Holy Spirit. Since the Father takes the initiative and the work of creation, it is often ascribed to Him economically.”<sup>17</sup> Hodge writes, “The universe was created *through* Jesus Christ, i.e. the energy of the one God was exercised *through* the Logos, who became flesh, assuming our nature into personal union with Himself, and is therefore called Jesus Christ.”<sup>18</sup>

## The Days of Creation (Genesis 1:3-31)

In verses three and following, with the inspired author turns his attention to the creation of light and God’s organization of the initial creation into a habitat suitable for mankind. Although in this section light is created by divine fiat (*fiat lux*), the rest of what occurs is God’s bringing forth life out of previously created materials. God says, “Let the waters bring forth. . .” (v. 20). “Let the earth bring forth. . .” (v. 24). God forms man out of the dust of the ground (2:7) and Eve is formed out of Adam’s own flesh taken from his side (2:21). Every beast of the earth and every bird of the air is made from the ground (2:19). Hamilton notes that, “One observes that the only item in Gen. 1 [1: 3f] that is created by *fiat*, strictly speaking is light: ‘and God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.’ Everything else is created, or emerges, in Gen. 1 by *fiat* plus some subsequent activity that is divinely instigated. Thus, there is no “let there be a vault,”

<sup>17</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1958), 129.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Hodge, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, [1857, 59] 1958), 145.

and there was a vault,' nor any "let there be lights/animal/man," and there [was] lights/animals/man.' So, after the 'Let there be' of day 2 (v. 6a) comes 'And God *made* the vault.'"<sup>19</sup>

The fact that God often used pre-existing materials in the creation week must not be misunderstood or misinterpreted to mean that God set in motion "natural" or evolutionary processes that over several millions of years resulted in the development of fish, birds, creeping animals and man. There are two things in the text that disprove such a theory. First, the descriptions of God's creative activity ("Let there be..." vs. 3, 6, 14; "Let the earth bring forth..." v. 11; etc.; "And God said..." vs. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29 "Thus [or] then God made..." vs. 7, 16, 25, "So God created..." vs. 21, 27), indicate *direct* and *immediate creative acts on particular days*, not an indirect working of providence over millions of years. Those who attempt to satisfy evolutionary dogma or uniformitarianism theories of geology by twisting the plain meaning of Scripture clearly are violating the literal, obvious sense of the text. God spoke and immediately light and life came into being. As Leupold notes, "It was all wrought by God's omnipotent word, not by mysterious emanations from the divine being, not by natural processes, not by self-causation, but in a manner worthy of God and revealing the character of God. He is at once discerned to be divinely powerful, intelligent, and far above the level of poor creatures: 'He speaks and it was done; He commands and it stood fast'" (Ps. 33:9).<sup>20</sup>

Second, all attempts to interpret the days of Genesis 1 as great indeterminate ages or periods of millions of years are exegetically untenable. The word "day" in this context obviously has the basic sense of the normal 24-hour period. This can be seen in the following observations. (1) There is the repeated mention of "evening and morning" in the account (vs. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Every time the word "day" (Hebrew, *yom*) is used with the number or with the phrase "evening and morning" in the Old Testament, it always refers to a normal 24-hour day. In Genesis 1 the inspired author wants to make sure that we understand he has normal 24-hour days in mind.

In addition, although it is true that the sun, moon and stars are not created until the fourth day, the idea that prior to the creation of the sun a day can be millions of years clearly violates the intended chronological sequence of the inspired author. No one reading this account prior to the supposed findings of modern science would regard any of these days as anything other than literal 24-hour days. A period of thousands or millions of years consisting of millions or billions of days obviously cannot honestly or literally be bounded by only one "evening and morning." That interpreters are willing to argue for such lengthy periods shows us (once again) the great length men will go to accommodate modern scientific theories.

If one argues that "day" may mean millions of years, then the chronology leading up to the Sabbath day and the reason annexed to the fourth commandment are not only misleading but also inaccurate. Note that when God finished His creative labors He rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3). This day is explicitly defined by the fourth commandment as a literal evening to

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<sup>19</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 119.

<sup>20</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 51.

morning 24-hour period: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt the labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt do not any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, or thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the seventh Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8-11). “Genesis 2:1-3 emphasizes the fact that creation is an act of God by declaring that on the seventh day, He rested ‘from all his work which God had made’ (Genesis 2:2). The *act* of creation was stressed; it was not a process.”<sup>21</sup> To turn days into great ages of natural processes is a rejection of the supernatural miracle-aspect of creation for an evolutionary-uniformitarian faith. It is an unbiblical attempt to merge the supernaturalism of Genesis 1 and 2 with humanistic idea of a closed naturalistic order. It is implicitly anti-Christian and dangerous.

The idea that the days of Genesis 1 are millions of years was largely designed to accommodate the fossil record. But once we keep in mind that death and the resultant fossils were only the result of Adam’s sin, which introduced death to the world, then we see that the day-age theory is superfluous. The Bible teaches that Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection will have cosmic implications. It will result in a future restoration of a pristine, sinless paradise. But, we ask, if the pre-fall world was full of death, cruelty, carnage and calamity (i.e. an animal world red in tooth and claw), then how is Christ’s redemption a paradise restored? The day-age theory with millions of years of death and carnage *prior to the fall* implicitly destroys the full message of the gospel. As soon as professing Christians allow for death, bloodshed, suffering, carnage and calamity *before* the fall, they implicitly destroy the full-orbed doctrine of salvation wrought by Christ. Paul says that Jesus will deliver creation itself from the bondage of corruption (Romans 8:21). This statement is meaningless if death and corruption is the natural state of things before the fall.

The fact that “day” means a real “day” raises an obvious question among believers familiar with modern science, in particular geology and the fossil record. If we take the creation account literally and hold the view that the earth is only around 6000 years old, how do we account for the “apparent” age of the earth and the myriads of fossils? The answer to this question lies in the acceptance of the universal flood of Noah which teaches us to reject the presuppositions of uniformitarianism and instead points us in the direction of what orthodox creationists called catastrophism. The worldwide flood of Noah best explains the fossil record, for plants and animals need to be covered rapidly to become fossils. In any case, we must trust Scripture and not anti-Christian unbelieving scientists.

## Other Introductory Considerations

Before we examine the creation narrative in detail there are a few more introductory matters that merit our attention.

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<sup>21</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *Genesis*, 11.

First, there is a definite form or pattern in the manner in which God prepares the earth for man. In the first three days we see organization or structural changes in the world that will allow for the coming of life. Then, in the second three days, we see a corresponding creative activity that builds upon the previous week. This point will become clear in the following table:

Form	Fullness
Day 1 Light and Dark	Day 4 Lights of Day and Night
Day 2 Sea and Sky	Day 5 Creatures of Water and Air
Day 3 Fertile Earth	Day 6 Creatures of the Land <sup>22</sup>

Second, this creation narrative is made up of the words spoken by God Himself and the words of the divinely inspired narrator (Moses). The words spoken by God are paramount. The narrator’s words are there to explain and fill out the details on the effectiveness of God’s creative word. One could say that God is the creator; the narrator is the explainer.

Third, the author follows a pattern or formula as he describes the various stages of creation: “1) announcement, ‘God said’; 2) command, ‘let there be’; 3) fulfillment, ‘it was so’; 4) execution, ‘light’; 5) approval, ‘saw... good’; 6) subsequent word, ‘God called’; 7) day number.”<sup>23</sup> The basic elements of this pattern are not found on every day. “The perfection of God’s handiwork is...made to appear in the *seven* times the word ‘good’ occurs here—vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31— also the word ‘made’ is found *seven* times in this section—1:7, 16, 25, 26, 31; 2:2, 3. *Seven* times ‘heaven’ is mentioned in this chapter – vv. 1, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17, 20. And it may be added, that ‘God’ Himself is referred to in this opening section (1:1-2:4) thirty five times, which is seven multiplied by five. Thus the seal of *perfection* is stamped upon everything God here did and made.”<sup>24</sup>

## The First Day

“Then God said, ‘let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:3-5). The first special creative act of God in preparing the earth for habitation is the creation of light. Verse 2 ended by telling us that the watery earth was completely enveloped in darkness. The whole universe at this time was completely and absolutely dark. Regarding the creation of light there are a number of things to note.

First, God *spoke* the light into existence. This verse introduces us to the frequently used phrase “and God said” (vs. 3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26). When we read of God speaking throughout the creation narrative, it is important to keep in mind that this speaking is not a movement of a

<sup>22</sup> This table is from Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (London: Tyndale, 1967), 46.

<sup>23</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 17.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis*, 13.

mouth or tongue which made certain sounds that formed words. This speaking is an anthropomorphic expression that indicates that God simply willed something to occur and His omnipotent creative power immediately accomplished what His will desired. “It is the divine word of command that brings into existence what it expresses.”<sup>25</sup> Throughout the Bible the word of God is powerful, creative and totally effective. This applies to the miraculous (miracles and signs), prophecy and the original creation.

A number of scholars see an obscure reference here to the fact that in creation the Father worked through the Word—the divine Logos, Jesus Christ. Although the New Testament emphasizes that the creation was through the Son of God, who is called the Word (e.g., see Jn. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3), the focus here is on God’s power to execute His will. As Matthew Henry notes, “O the power of the word of God! *He spake and it was done*, done really, effectually, and for perpetuity, not in show only, and to serve a present turn, for *He commanded, and it stood fast* [Ps. 33:9].... The word of God (that is his will and good pleasure of it) is quick and powerful....”<sup>26</sup>

Second, light is created first because it is foundational to all that follows. Although light seems ethereal to us, it is absolutely essential for all life and human existence. It is logical that light is first in preparing the earth to be man’s home. Without created light there can be no energy or heat or sight on planet earth. No life could exist without its radiant energy. Without it, days could not even be numbered. There are some interesting things about this light that merit our attention.

(1) This light comes into existence out of nothing. The Latin Vulgate says “fiat lux.” The light springs into existence by divine fiat. It came from nothing. There was no big bang and at this time the sun and stars did not yet exist. The fact that light is brought into existence directly by God before the creation of the sun is especially significant to an ancient audience. It shows man that God creates light, energy, warmth and the things that flow from light such as crops and that therefore God alone is to be worshiped and served, not the sun. “The ancient world was a sun worshiping world. The Egyptian hieroglyphics speak of the god *Ra* who was the son god. The Hittites speak of a man that becomes a sun. In the ancient Near East the concept of the sun is very prominent. There, where the sun is shining for the greater part of the day, sinful man would lift up his eyes, see the sun in the sky, and worship it as a god. But that we may understand that light, the necessary foundation for all life, is the gift of God and not of the sun, light is mentioned before the sun.”<sup>27</sup>

That light is created before the sun and stars is significant to modern ears because it demonstrates that the presuppositions and findings of modern science on origins and the age of the universe cannot be trusted. Modern secular scientists will argue that light existing apart from light-bearing stars is unscientific and irrational. Christian liberals who blindly follow secular scientists argue that since light is dependent upon the sun, the creation account must be a myth.

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<sup>25</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (McLean, VA: McDonald Pub., no date), 1:4.

<sup>27</sup> E. J. Young, *In the Beginning*, 40.

Astronomers using the distance of the farthest stars and the speed of light tell us that this proves the universe is several billion years old. But all of these scientific hypotheses fall to the ground when we take into consideration that light existed before the creation of the sun and stars. God is not dependent on His ordinary providential means when He deals with his creation. If He wants to create the waves/particles that make up light before He creates the light-bearers, then so be it. Faith must accept this as true or factual because the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant.

(2) That light is the first work of the creation week corresponds to the light that Christ imparts to sinners in the Spirit's work of regeneration. In order for men to savingly embrace Christ by faith, they first need the light of spiritual elimination. Paul says, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:5-6). Here there is an obvious reference to the original work of creation. The earth was covered in a veil of complete darkness until God said, "Let there be light." So, similarly, the unregenerate man is enveloped in spiritual darkness and is completely blind to spiritual reality until God through His Spirit shines in his heart. Based on the work of Christ, who has wrought a new creation by His victory over Satan, sin and death, the Spirit raises dead hearts and produces an inward illumination. The regenerated mind not only understands the gospel but embraces it. For him Christ becomes the proper object of faith, love, worship and honor. Clearly then, God deliberately patterns the re-creation after the first creation. "Darkness would have been perpetually upon the face of fallen man if the Son of God had not *come, and given us an understanding*, 1 John v. 20."<sup>28</sup>

Third, after the total fulfillment of the divine Word is noted ("and there was light"), God approves His own handiwork: "And God saw the light, that it was good" (v. 4). God is pictured as a great artist who pauses to admire His own work. The purpose of this praise (which occurs seven times in this chapter; vs. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) is for us, God's rational creatures, to appreciate the beauty and wisdom of the creation. God did not need to create anything and there is nothing in creation that even remotely captures God's full glory or essence. The creation does bear witness to the greatness and goodness of the Creator. Light is good in the sight of God for it illuminates the darkness and is indispensable for the life of plants, animals and mankind. Without light there can be no sight, heat or life. Light is pictured as such a good thing in Scripture that it is used metaphorically for life, salvation, holiness, the moral commandments, purity and even the presence of God (e.g., Ps. 56:14; Isa. 9:1; Prov. 6:23; Ex. 10:23; etc.). Christ is pictured the source of all spiritual light: "In Him was life and the life was the light of man. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (Jn. 1:4-5).

All these statements by God on the goodness of creation teach us that God is to receive all the glory for what He has made. The creation is beautiful, pleasant, useful and delightful only because God made it so. They also teach us that we are to evaluate all created reality only in terms of God's word. The word "good" (*tobh*) draws our attention to the created object's quality and fitness for its created purpose. It is clear, however, from the broad context of Scripture that

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<sup>28</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Gospel*, 1:4.

only God is infinitely good and his goodness is reflected in His works. People who look at the goodness and beauty of creation and end up worshipping “nature” or created objects of this world have completely rejected the biblical doctrine of creation and have “exchanged the truth of God for the lie” (Rom. 1:25).

Fourth, after praising His own work, “God divided the light from the darkness” (v. 4). One of the great themes of this chapter is separation and organization. For the light to be useful for man it had to be separated from the darkness. How this was achieved and what exactly took place we are not told. The fact that light will be called “day” and the darkness “night” in the next verse seems to indicate that the light came from one direction and at this time the earth began to rotate on its axis. It is not that light and darkness were commingled together, for light dispels darkness. But, rather, in relation to the earth God made a separation. “Separated” here means “not to pull apart, but to assign each part to its respective sphere and slot.... In creation there is a separation toward order: light from darkness, waters above from waters below, day from night, woman from man. In sin and trespass there is a separation toward disorder: man and woman from God; man from woman; man from the soil; man from the garden.”<sup>29</sup> In Christ’s redemptive re-creation there once again is a separation toward order and holiness: separation from the old man, separation from sin, separation from God’s enemies, separation from that which is unclean and defiling. With this in mind, we must remember that the original creative darkness of the universe was not evil or negative. It is simply not adequate for life, energy and growth. The nighttime, even before the fall, served an important purpose, for man, animals and even plants need a period of rest and recuperation.

Fifth, God gave the separated light and darkness names: “God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.” In the Hebrew mindset, which is derived from Scripture, the assigning of a name to something is significant. It is not a mere arbitrary label for convenience sake, but is designed to express the nature of the thing named. Here God gives names before man even exists. By naming the light and the darkness God is exercising his sovereignty over creation. “In the Old Testament, to name something is to assert sovereignty over it; cf. 2:20; 2 Kgs. 23:34; 24:7.”<sup>30</sup> God is the sovereign organizer of creation who defines the role or purpose of created light and darkness. “He is the Lord of time, and will be so, till day and night shall come to an end, and the stream of time be swallowed up in this ocean of eternity. Let us acknowledge God in the constant succession of day and night, and consecrate both to his honour,

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<sup>29</sup> V. P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 119, 120. Matthew Henry writes, “Though the darkness was now scattered by the light, yet it was not condemned to a perpetual banishment, but takes its turns with the light, and has its place, because it has its use; for, as the light of the morning befriends the business of the day, so the shadows of the evening befriend the repose of the night, and draw the curtains about us, that we may sleep the better. See Job vii. 2. God has thus divided time between light and darkness, because he would dearly remind us that this is a world of mixtures and changes. In heaven there is perfect and perpetual light, and no darkness at all; in hell, utter darkness, and no gleam of light. In that world between these two there is a great gulf fixed; but, in this world, they are counterchanged, and we pass daily from one to the other, that we may learn to expect the like this vicissitudes in the province of God, peace and trouble, joy and sorrow, and may set the one over-against the other, accommodating ourselves to both as we do to the light and darkness, bidding both welcome, and making the best of both” (*Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:5).

<sup>30</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 19.

by working for him every day and resting in him every night, and meditating in his law day and night.”<sup>31</sup>

God has separated and defined light and darkness for the sake of mankind who will be created on the sixth day. That daylight on planet earth comes from a source other than the sun, which is not created for another three days, is not a problem for the inspired author and should not be a problem for us. The authors of Scripture were not ignorant about the sun as a light-bearer. They simply understood that God is the sovereign Creator of light and that “the very order of creation, bears witness that he holds in his hands the light, which he is able to impart to us without the sun and moon.”<sup>32</sup>

Sixth, the creation of light, the separation of light and darkness and the naming of each is marked out by the formula: “There was evening and morning, a first day (v. 5). This formula will close the account of each day’s creative activity. Each earth day is marked by the boundaries “evening” and “morning.” The mention of the evening before morning likely reflects the Jewish concept of the day beginning at dusk, not at dawn. The Jewish Sabbath was a 24-hour period from evening to evening: “from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your Sabbath” (Lev. 23:32). The Psalmist describes his day as “evening, morning, and noon” (55:17); that is, all the day long. The first day of creation began and darkness and as daylight ended the first creative day and did. The word “day” in 5b is used in a different manner than the previous sentence. In the first half of verse 5, day refers to the time of daylight; here it refers to a full 24-hour period consisting of the night and the day. Although the sun and stars are not created until the fourth day, there is no exegetical reason to regard this day as anything other than a normal 24-hour period. In this verse we have the first definition of day in Scripture, a day bounded by evening and morning. It would be misleading to the original audience if this day was anything other than a literal day (e.g., ages or millions of years).

## The Second Day

Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day (Gen. 1:6-8).

The first thing that God does after creating light and dividing the light from the darkness is to create an atmosphere to divide the waters in the sky from the waters on the earth. The word translated as firmament, vault or expanse is *raqiah* which comes from a root meaning “to hammer” or “to spread out.” In this passage it does not refer to a large dome-like structure which

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:5. It is noteworthy that the “Bible begins and ends by describing an untarnished world that is filled with light, but no sun (cf. Rev. 22:5). Should not the one who is himself called ‘light’ (1 John 1:5) have at his disposal many sources by which he dispatches light into his creation?” (Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1 to 17*, 121, footnote 7).

<sup>32</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 1:76.

holds back liquid water but to the atmosphere which holds water in the form of vapor or mist. That the author has the atmosphere in mind and not a shiny solid surface is proved from the following considerations. (1) Nothing is said to imply a space between the expanse and the lower waters. There is nothing said to imply a solid surface being made to separate the waters. Apparently, the greatest expanse *fills the space* between the upper and lower waters. In Genesis 2:6 we learn that rain does not yet pour from heaven. Before the world wide flood, the atmosphere apparently held a great deal more water than its present post-flood state. (2) In Genesis 1:20 we are told that the birds fly (according to the literal Hebrew) “upon the face” of the firmament. The preposition used (*al*) indicates that the birds were flying upon the air of the atmosphere not flying below a solid dome holding back liquid water. (3) The Jews understood that the air in the sky held water in the form of clouds. In the Hebrew worldview the great expanse extended from the surface of the earth to the third heaven or what we would call space. The lower and thicker parts form the atmosphere and holds the air in which we breathe. The higher thinner parts can be used by birds. (4) The word “expanse” or “firmament” is used of the atmosphere in other places in the Hebrew Scriptures: “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). The LORD stretches “out the heaven like a curtain” (or firmament) (Ps. 104:2). He “stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in” (Isa. 40:22). God has spread out the heavens as something to dwell in as men live in a tent. G. Ch. Aalders writes, “When we consult all the passages in the Old Testament where the word expanse appears there is not a single designation of something that looks like a massive dome as some have suggested. Even Job 37:18 does not intend to ascribe to the cloud (that is what is referred to) the firmness of actual metal. The old Israelites, who were far better acquainted with open nature than we are, could not have been unaware of the inner mobility of the clouds. The ‘molten mirror’ could not possibly have been considered a suitable object for comparison with the closely packed covering of clouds.”<sup>33</sup> “This firmament is not a wall of partition, but a way of intercourse.”<sup>34</sup>

When day two begins, the earth has light but is still a wasteland covered by water. God creates an atmosphere and takes a good portion of water from upon the earth and places it above the earth in the newly formed expanse. Prior to the creation of the atmosphere, the waters upon the earth had nowhere to go.

In verse 7 we have a verbal repetition which highlights the correspondence between God’s word of command and its fulfillment. The command for the great expanse to come into being and the statement that God made the firmament are complementary. The spoken word was brought to completion by God’s power. The verb “He made” (*asah*) does not need to be taken in a radically different sense from “creating” (*bara*). While “He made” can speak of the radical, miraculous changing of pre-existing materials, it can also be used synonymously with the verb “create.” “From one point of view one and the same task is *created*, i.e. is one of those marvelous epoch-making achievements characteristic of God; from another point of view this

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<sup>33</sup> G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis*, 1:59.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:5.

task is *made*, i.e. God employs His almighty power and energy to carry it through till it is completed.”<sup>35</sup>

The creation of the atmosphere which holds water vapor and contains the elements that man, animals and plants need to live, is a great step forward in making the earth habitable for man. But for the macro-evolutionist the formation of earth’s life-sustaining atmosphere poses an incredible, insurmountable problem. According to evolutionary theory, the earth at one time had no atmosphere and thus was continuously bombarded with deadly radiation from the sun. The evolutionist holds that the atmosphere with its life-giving oxygen came into being over millions of years as single-celled plant life evolved in the primordial oceans and released oxygen into the air. But this view raises a few questions that evolutionists simply ignore. How could any life come into being or evolve under a constant stream of deadly radiation? In addition, if life could evolve, what would keep the gases produced from simply dissipating in space? Evolutionists ignore the fact that the atmosphere in its fully developed state made by God is *absolutely essential for life* to exist on earth. A planet *without* an atmosphere containing water, oxygen, a protective shield against deadly radiation and proper temperatures is a lifeless, useless planet. Macro-evolutionists place their faith in the impossible and the absurd because they are in rebellion against the infinite personal God of Scripture who created all things. As Paul says, “Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (Rom. 1:22-25).

After His creative work regarding the firmament is complete, “God called the firmament Heaven” (v. 8). Note once again that the naming of something by God reveals his authority over it. There is nothing in creation that is arbitrary, autonomous or controlled by chance. The word “heaven” here could be translated “sky” and that refers to the atmosphere where the upper waters reside. The word “heavens” in verse 1 is broad and refers to everything in the universe beside the earth. Here it refers to what a Jew would call the first heaven. The first heaven extends from the surface of the earth to a remote point where life, air and water vapor cease. The second heaven refers to the realm of outer space where the stars exist. The third heaven refers to the spiritual place outside of our universe where God, the holy angels and the souls of the saints who have died live. The first heaven is where the waters above reside. The Old Testament consistently presents the releasing of the waters from this heaven as rain (Gen. 7:12, 9:14; Jdg. 5:4; 1 Kgs. 18:45; Isa. 5:6; Job 26:8; Ps. 77:17).

This verse closes with the statement that the creation of the sky took place on the second day: “So the evening and the morning were the second day” (v. 8). After the beaming light of the first day faded into the darkness, the starkness of the evening introduces second day. With the coming of morning and the renewal of the light, the blue sky and the cloudy vapors became visible for the first time. When the darkness returned, the second day of creation became history

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<sup>35</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 59.

for the ages. Every breath we take and every drop of rain for or crops and pleasure we owe solely to God the creator. Whenever we look at the supreme beauty of the heavens (e.g., the blue sky with, the radiant sun, the dramatic thunderstorm, the magnificent clouds) we should pause and praise God who made the heaven for us.

## The Third Day

And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth” and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself, according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day (Gen. 1:9-13).

The work of the third day of creation was twofold. God caused the dry land to be separated from the waters. Then, with the appearance of dry land, God created plant life. The logical progression of creation that makes the earth a place hospitable for man continues. God creates light, then an atmosphere and now dry land. This is another great act of separation. At this time it appears that the whole earth was covered with water. If the crust of the earth was uniform, a universal ocean would have been the result. To create dry land God merely separated the water to one place. How this occurred is not specified but such an act would only require a sinking of the ocean floor in certain places, a rising of the elevation of certain areas of land or both. God caused the water to be gathered together with specific boundaries. As John Gill notes, “This was done by the word of the Lord, at his rebuke; and when it seems there was a clap of thunder, and perhaps an earthquake, which made the vast cavity for the sea, as well as threw up the hills and mountains, and made the valleys.”<sup>36</sup> God spoke of this great event to Job, “who shut in the seas with doors, when it burst forth and issued from the womb; when I made the clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band: I fixed my limit for it, and set bars and doors, when I said, this far you may come, but no further, and here your proud waves must stop!” (38:8-11; cf. Ps. 136:6; 2 Pet. 3:5).

Noting that the waters are gathered into “one place” a number of Christians believe that the account speaks of one great ocean with a single continent at this time. (It has been noted by geologists that all the current continents fit together neatly like puzzle pieces and thus it is likely that at one time they formed one massive continent which they call Pangaea.) This view, however, is not required by the text, for the plural seas (*yamin*) and not singular (*yam*) is used in verse 10. Perhaps we should understand “one place” as indicating that all the oceans of the world are interconnected and thus essentially are one.

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<sup>36</sup> John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament* (Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, [1810] 1979), 1:6.

With the separation of the waters from the land, dry ground appeared. “The word used here means ‘that which is really dry,’ actual dry land such as fruit trees can grow in.”<sup>37</sup> When God separated the waters from the land, He did not leave the ground a swampy mire or water soaked muck, but supernaturally dried up the ground for the plant life it was about to come. The land was fertile and ready to receive plant life.

After the fulfillment formula (“and it was so,” v. 9), God named the dry land “earth.” The word “earth” or “land” was used to describe the uninhabitable earth in verse 1. It here refers to the dry land which is given to mankind for home. The land upon which we walk, grow food, work and live is a wonderful gift from God. We who, to this day, enjoy the benefit of dry land must keep in our minds that we are tenants to God who made this land and made it lush and bountiful. We are dependent upon God who created and sustains the earth. Once again God pauses to behold his creative handiwork: “And God saw that it was good.” “This anthropomorphic way of speaking reminds us that also this work of divine creation was perfect and completely fulfilled God’s plan and purpose.”<sup>38</sup> Before Adam’s fall there was nothing bad about this earth. Those things that are currently bad on this planet are only there because of man’s sin not God’s original creative purpose.

With the land separated from the waters and made dry, God proceed to the next creative word: “Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so” (v. 11). This is the first mention of life in the creation account. Life did not begin with single-celled organisms and shallow ponds, which is a foolish fantasy of the macro-evolutionist. Rather, God caused plant life to spring forth directly out of the soil. God used dirt as a mediate agent to *miraculously and instantaneously* bring forth full-grown vegetative life. In preparation for the creation of man, God adorned the bare, lifeless earth with a lush covering of plant life. As Matthew Henry reminds us, “The earth was *emptiness* (v. 2), but now, by a word’s speaking, it has become full of God’s riches, and his they are still—*his corn and his wine, his wool and his flax*, Hosea ii.9. Though the use of them is allowed to us, the property still remains in him, and to his service and honor they must be used.”<sup>39</sup>

The three orders of plant life mentioned are: grass, herbs and trees. Although it is very likely that every species of plant was created at this time, the account here focuses our attention on the plants that are useful for man and necessary for his existence. Although the word “grass” (*deshe*) covers an incredibly wide array of plant life, those reading this account would think of the life-sustaining grains that are the staple of man’s diet and the grasses which sustain man’s cattle, sheep and goats. The word “herbs” or “plants” (*ēseb*) is very general and covers everything from oregano and carrots to underbrush. The expression “fruit-bearing trees” includes trees that bear edible fruit as well as trees that bear nuts, beans, berries and cones. The Jews would think of crucial fruit trees such as the olive and fig trees.

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<sup>37</sup> E. J. Young, *In the Beginning*, 45.

<sup>38</sup> G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis*, 1:62.

<sup>39</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:6.

The modern earth worshipping environmentalist looks at the earth as existing for its own sake. In their worldview, man is the intruder who fouls the pristine planet. Mankind is like a cancer that must be removed so that plants, trees and animals can be at peace. The biblical view is that the earth and all its plant life were created for man's benefit. This view was seen in the Psalmist's words, "He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes the heart of man glad, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart" (Ps. 104:14-15). This view does not mean that the dominion mandate authorizes man to abuse the earth, or plant life, or animals. It most certainly does not! The godly man cares for his animals and seeks to make the earth a garden, not a polluted wasteland.

The biblical view recognizes man's God-ordained place in the earth and guards against the temptation to worship the earth or place nature above man. When God created the earth, He clearly had man and the dominion mandate in mind. God created plant life so that it could beautify the bare earth and offer man and beast the fruit of its labor. Man cannot eat dirt or derive sustenance from the rays of the sun. Plants take nutrients in the soil and sunlight and process them into a rich, delicious and nutritious food for mankind. Let us not forget that man did not eat any meat until after the flood of Noah. Plants are the beginning of the food chain. They prepare from the earth, rain and sun the fruits necessary for all living creatures of this planet.

In verse 11, we are told that the seed bearing plants and the trees reproduce themselves by bearing seed "each according to its kind." Everything that exists, exists only because of the created word of God. Yet God has created things in such a manner that they can reproduce themselves so that the created order has continuity over time. The phrase "after their kind" indicates that, when it comes to reproduction, God has set up particular and definite limitations. God has set limits or insurmountable barriers so that the kinds remain distinct and cannot be mixed or crossed with other species. This wise law protects the great diversity of God's creation and teaches us that God has set down sharp lines of demarcation that we must respect. "There is a givenness about time and space which God has ordered by his own decree. Different species of plant and animal life again bear testimony to God's creative plan. The implication, though not stated, is clear: what God has distinguished and created, man ought not to confuse (Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:9-11). Order, not chaos, is the hallmark of God's activity."<sup>40</sup> Once again, we see that the plain sense of Genesis 1 stands as a sharp contradiction to macro-evolution. Macro-evolution teaches that the amoeba developed into the amphibian, which in turn became a reptile, which then became a mammal, which in turn became an ape, caveman and then modern man. The strict barrier between species in such a system is denied for the hypothesis of species in a constant change and flux. The biblical view is confirmed by current reality regarding the fixed nature species.

Once again, God looks upon the new creative work and notes "that it was good" (v. 12). The barren earth is one step closer to paradise. "With the conclusion of the third day yet another color is added to God's cosmos. To the basic white and black of day and night has been added

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<sup>40</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 21.

the blue sky and sea. Now the canvas is adorned with green.”<sup>41</sup> The vast grasslands, meadows, forests and tropical jungles were brought into being by God for man. The pagans who lived when Moses wrote these words sought fertility through wicked rituals done to appease false gods. The account in Genesis attributes all fertility and life to work of the one true God.

## The Fourth Day

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day (Gen. 1:14-19).

The creation of the sun, moon and stars is described in greater length and with more detail and explanation than the other days. The fullness of description and explanation suggests an implicit contrast with the widespread superstition of the heathen at that time. In Middle Eastern thought, the astral bodies controlled the destiny of man and the sun and moon were considered crucial, preeminent gods in the pantheon of many cultures. For the inspired author of Genesis, the sun, moon and stars are not gods at all but mere created objects that serve man by giving him light and by dividing up time into days, years and seasons. These created objects are not eternal, powerful or autonomous but rather finite objects that, like our air, water and plant life, are there to help man serve and glorify God. These luminaries are not gods or eternal; they are created. They do not exist to be served or worshiped by man but rather to serve man as man serves the true and living God—the creator.

Here we have a biblical description that explicitly contradicts modern science. According to current scientific theory, the stars developed before the planets and any idea of the earth existing first or light existing before stars is ludicrous. Sadly, some evangelicals have been influenced by secular humanistic scientists and thus argue that in this context the Hebrew word used here means that Jehovah made the stars *to appear*. In others, they were already there since God created light but they were obstructed (this is the position of the New Scofield Reference Bible). Newman and Eckelman set forth this understanding when they give us the following speculative interpretation: “Since the Genesis account has already mentioned atmospheric water, and since Job 38:9 speaks of clouds and ‘thick darkness’ covering the seas, it is more reasonable to suppose that Genesis 1:14-19 describes the first appearance of the sun, moon and stars to our hypothetical earthbound observer on the occasion of the breakup of the earth's cloud cover.”<sup>42</sup> There are a number of serious problems with this interpretation. First, it is only “more reasonable” if one accepts the unbelieving presuppositions of modern naturalistic science. Why

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<sup>41</sup> V. P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1 to 17*, 126.

<sup>42</sup> Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelman Jr, *Genesis 1 and the Origin of the Earth*, 80.

evangelicals repeatedly reject the obvious meaning of the text and reinterpret it based on the unproven and unprovable theories of atheistic, anti-Christian unbelievers is baffling. With Paul, we should simply trust God's inspired word and say, "Let God be true but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). Second, the verb used here (*asah*) does not mean "made to appear" but rather "made." "Evangelicals never gain anything for their cause by trying to force language to say what it does not say."<sup>43</sup> Third, since Adam and Eve were not brought into existence until the sixth day, the idea that the author is writing the point of view of a "hypothetical earthbound observer" is untenable. Any ancient Hebrew who read this passage would immediately take it in its obvious literal sense as the day the sun, moon and stars came into being. These bodies were not created out of nothing; God used material He had already created out of nothing. But, prior to the fourth day, these luminaries did not yet exist. On the fourth day, the universe, with all its heavenly bodies as we now know it, was made and put into position.

The fact that, in the narrative, light was created on the first day and already existed independently of the sun and stars, supports the fact that Genesis is divinely inspired. No modern or ancient person would posit light before the existence of light-bearers. As noted in our discussion of the first day, God is emphasizing His power and authority over light and here the light-bearers. This is a direct repudiation of the Egyptian, Canaanite, Hittite and Sumerian worldviews. The light that Jehovah created *ex nihilo* on the first day was now sovereignly assigned to various heavenly bodies. It was not annihilated to make way for the sun and stars but only organized. This explains why the universe is young yet, given the distance of the farthest stars, appears old.

The divine commands regarding the making of the light-bearers contain statements regarding their purpose: (1) to divide the light from the day (14a); (2) for signs, for fixed times (i.e. seasons), for days and years; (3) to give light upon the earth. This is followed by a general statement of fulfillment, "and it was so" (15c); and a specific statement of the making of the two great lights (the sun and moon) with a description of their purpose (to rule the day and rule the night). The stars are mentioned after the reason for making the sun and moon almost as an afterthought (the 16 be). The threefold function of the heavenly luminaries is to *divide* (day from night and mark time); to *give light* and to *rule* as luminaries storing their assigned time (sun—the day; moon—the night). In verse 17 the lights are all set in their proper place by God and then the purposes are stated again in *reverse order* to underline their real function (structured inversions of this kind [called palistrophes] are a common feature of Hebrew prose).<sup>44</sup>

Back in verse 3, light by itself was created by God, but it was not yet organized to be fully useful to mankind. On the fourth day, the light becomes collected, focused, moved and organized to shine from specific luminaries so that man can more effectively function and have dominion over God's creation. On the placement of the luminaries, John Gill notes, "He placed them there with his own hands; and they are placed, particularly the sun, at such a particular distance as to be beneficial and not hurtful: had it been set nearer to the earth, its heat would have

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<sup>43</sup> E. J. Young, *In the Beginning: Genesis 1-3 and the Authority of Scripture*, 47.

<sup>44</sup> See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 22.

been intolerable; and had it been farther off it would have been of no use; in the one case we would have been scorched with its heat, and in the other been frozen up for want of it.”<sup>45</sup> We could add that the tilt and rotation of the earth is perfect for moderate temperature swings. In addition, the distance of the moon to the earth is perfect to provide the right amount of reflecting light and to provide tides which flush out our bays, coastal zones and estuaries. The large planets of Saturn and Neptune (with their exceptional gravitational fields) protect the earth from the vast majority of asteroids. The amazing complexity and precise care taken to set the earth up as a perfect habitat for humanity shows us the wisdom and power of God. The stated purposes of this creative activity by God are as follows

First, the separation and concentration of light into bodies is necessary for man to fulfill the dominion mandate. Man needs light in order to see and work as well as mark time. “The lights of heaven do not shine for themselves, or for the world of spirits above, that need them not, but they shine for us, for our pleasure and advantage.”<sup>46</sup> The sun is said to rule the day. This speaks of the effect of the sunshine. Poole notes how the sun rules: “either, 1. To influence the earth with heat or moisture, and to govern men’s actions and affairs, which commonly are transacted by day; for the word day is sometimes put metonymically for the events of the day, as Prov. xxvii.1; 1 Cor. iii.13. Or, 2. To regulate and manage the day; by its rise to begin it, by its gradual process to carry it on, even to midday, and by its declination and setting to impair and end it. Which seems most probable, because the moon is in like manner said *to rule the night*...”<sup>47</sup> For thousands of years, before the invention of alarm clocks, man arose to the rays of the sun. Time was kept in ancient times by means of the sundial. The sun marks the days so that man can work six days and rest the seventh day (or, in the New Covenant era, the first day). The lights that God created are not gods but rather finite created bodies that help mankind. “The lights of heaven are made to serve us, and they do it faithfully, and shine in their season without fail.”<sup>48</sup>

The lights not only divide the day from night but are also signs that marked out seasons (fixed times) as well as days and years. By studying the sun, moon and stars men have devised very accurate calendars. Men have been able to determine the winter, spring, summer and fall. This information is crucial for an agricultural society. (Once again we see that Jehovah is preparing the earth to receive mankind as the crown of God’s creative work.) Through the lights man, beast and plants are regulated. “As *signs* (14) they will speak for God, not for fate (Jer. 10:2; cf. Mt. 2:9; Lk. 21:25, 28), for they *rule* (16, 18) only as light bearers, not as powers. In these few simple sentences the lie is given to a superstition as old as Babylon and as modern as a newspaper-horoscope.”<sup>49</sup> Therefore, let us “give thanks of the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever: ...To Him who made great lights, for His mercy endures forever—The sun to

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<sup>45</sup> John Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, 1:8.

<sup>46</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:7.

<sup>47</sup> Matthew Poole, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 1:3.

<sup>48</sup> Matthew Henry, 1:7.

<sup>49</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 49.

rule by day, for His mercy endures forever; the moon and stars to rule by night, for His mercy endures forever” (Ps. 136:3, 7-8).

The inspired author could have said more about the important purposes of the sun, moon and stars but limited his comments for the brevity of the narrative and the nature of the original audience. The sun, for example, is the source of heat, light and energy on our planet and its rays cause all plants to grow. The sun, moon and stars give man reference points not only with regard to time but also space. Navigation on the ocean and broad plains would be impossible without these reference points. Moreover, Scripture in other places notes the beauty of the heavens; its magnificence as showing forth the glory of God. As David says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).

The making of the sun, moon and stars by Jehovah and their purpose in helping man as God’s servants should give man a proper perspective on astronomy and should dispel all pagan superstitions regarding the luminaries. The study of the heavenly bodies must not be done based on evolutionary presuppositions but as a way to glorify God and help mankind serve Jesus Christ. All thoughts of finding aliens, or life on other planets, is a complete waste of time. Man should not try to go to dead, inhospitable planets; but, rather, study the universe to see the amazing power and wisdom of God. The widespread practice of astrology in our day must be seen as a form of idolatry. It is not a cute fad but a demonic delusion. It is somewhat ironic that, in our supposedly scientific age, pagan superstitions like astrology are so popular. Humanistic rationalism inevitably leads to mystical irrationalism as people seek meaning and purpose for their lives. The creation account tells us to accept the heavens as created by God and to give the same meaning and purpose to the sun, moon and stars that God assigns to them. The luminaries divide time so we can work for God and worship Him privately and publicly at the assigned times.

After God sets the luminaries in their respective places and courses to control the orderly rotation of days and nights, seasons and years, He beholds His creative work and declares it to be good or excellent (*tobh*). The original created light that glimmered in the sky was good but imperfect in that it could not function as a comprehensive reference point for man and did not have the amazing beauty of our night sky. The heavens are God's masterpiece and He acknowledges their intrinsic beauty and goodness for mankind.

This concludes another day of creation: “And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.” This day involved not simply the earth rotating in the original creative waves of light that were existing supernaturally but the earth spinning in relation to the newly created sun. The expression “evening and morning” as in the other days indicates a literal 24-hour period. The luminaries are created on the fourth day so that man could have an accurate reference point for time is fitting in that the Sabbath day is commanded in the fourth commandment.

## The Fifth Day

And God said, “Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.” And God created great

whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God bless them saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day (Genesis 1:20-23).

God's creative work on the fifth day concerns the making of creatures that live in the waters and birds that fly in the sky. Just as days one (the original creation of light) and four (the making of the luminaries) correspond; so also, days two (the separation of water in the atmosphere from the waters upon the earth) and five (the making of air creatures and water creatures) are closely related. "It goes without saying that day five does not form an adequate parallel to day two. The sea creatures of day five belong, not to the waters of day two but to the seas of the first work of day three."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, we understand that the realm of the birds is not simply the sky or air above but the earth or dry land of day three also (birds make their nests in trees, bushes, grasslands, cliffs, rocks etc.). There is a logical progression in God's creative activity in that life in the waters and the birds of the air are completely dependent on the plant life made on the third day as well. Before the fall, the food chain was completely dependent upon plant life. God makes the earth inhabitable for man in a structured, orderly manner. These verses reveal the first time that living souls, with sight, senses, thought, instinct and the ability to travel about appear.

In verses 20 and 22 we have God speaking (verse 20 the fifth day is introduced by the creative word of God: "let the waters teem...") followed by Moses' more detailed description in verse 21 (the water creatures are divided into two categories: very large water creatures and small aquatic creatures). The Authorized Version's translation, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly" is erroneous and misleading. It sounds as though the waters were turned into various fish and sea creatures. The Hebrew literally says, "Let the waters swarm of swarming things." This statement is descriptive and does not tell us the mediate source of fish and water creatures. This picture is of the waters teeming with new life, in particular, schools of various kinds of fish and sea mammals. "*Sherets* used in reference to the fish is a graphically descriptive term. All forms of life that love to move in continual agitation through one another, like shoals of fish and the like are involved. This pronounced gregarious instinct marks these creatures to this day."<sup>51</sup> Moses describes the birds above the earth flying across the face of the firmament or expanse. From the earth the birds appear to be flying against the background of the sky. By God's creative word, the emptiness of the sky and the waters is in one moment canceled.

In verse 21 we see Moses' inspired commentary regarding the creative word of God in the previous verse. He makes it very clear that every conceivable water creature and air creature was made at this time. He notes two categories for water creatures. First, there are the enormous water creatures. The KJV uses "great sea monsters" while modern translations favor "great sea creatures" (and NKJV, RSV, NIV). The term "monsters" implies something terrifying or scary, but, *before the fall*, all of God's creatures lived in harmony and none were a threat to man. The

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<sup>50</sup> Edward J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One*, 97.

<sup>51</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 79.

Hebrew word for “great sea creatures” (*tanninim*) is translated as dragon, serpent, whale or sea monster. In Psalm 74:13-14, we are told that God broke the heads of dragons (NKJV, “Leviathan”) in pieces. “Isa. 27:1 announces the eschatological day on which Yahweh will punish Leviathan ‘and slay the dragon that is in the sea.’ Isa. 51: 9 also refers to the past when God cut Rahab to pieces, pierced the dragon, and dried up the sea and the water of the great deep.... Of the nine other OT references to *tannin*, most indicate some land or sea creature (serpent: Exod. 7:9, 10, 12; Deut. 32:33; Ps. 91:13; perhaps ‘crocodile’ in Ezek. 29:3 and 32:2).”<sup>52</sup> The expression “great sea creatures” covers all the very large water creatures, whether fish (the enormous extinct sea “dinosaurs,” sharks, manta rays, etc.), invertebrates (e.g., giant octopuses, squids, eels), or mammals (whales, walruses, hippopotami, killer whales, etc.), reptiles (crocodiles, alligators, giant snakes, etc.).

Perhaps the reason that *tanninim* are singled out is that in Canaanite mythology the *tanninim* were awesome creatures that represented the powers of chaos which confronted their chief deity, Baal, in the cycles of nature. “To the Canaanites...Baal’s adversaries were gods like himself, or demons to be propitiated; and to the Babylonians the chaos monster Tiamat pre-existed the gods.”<sup>53</sup> But in the biblical account they are mere creatures, created by an all-powerful infinite personal God. They are not gods and are not to be feared but rather a man is to have dominion over them for God’s glory. Repeatedly, as we have seen, the first chapter Genesis refutes all ancient and modern pagan worldviews.

Second, Moses notes the much smaller aquatic creatures. The word rendered “creeping” or “moves” in 21b means literally “gliding about” or “moving lightly about.” It is the perfect word to describe a wide variety of movement from fish, crustaceans (crabs, lobsters, trilobites), jellyfish, small squid, octopi, water snakes, elephants, porpoises, sea slugs and snails, and all water insects, etc. If we compare the amazing variety of sea life known today with the thousands of extinct sea creatures from the past, the complexity, variety and immense beauty of life that Jehovah made to live in the waters is astounding. “The curious formation of the bodies of animals, their different sizes, shapes, and natures, with the admirable powers of the sensitive life with which they are endued, when duly considered, served, not only to silence and shame the objections of atheists and infidels, but to raise high thoughts and high praises of God in pious and devout souls”<sup>54</sup> (cf. Ps. 104:24-26).

The author notes in the second half of the verse that both water creatures and creatures of the air are created as distinct species (i.e. “after their kind”). The creation account allows for no transmutation of species through breeding or through macro-evolution. God created an amazing variety and this variety is *fixed for all time*. While the original animals, plants, water creatures, birds, etc. could have certain species become extinct after the fall, no new species could come into existence after the original creation. This biblical teaching is borne out by the fossil record in history. The fossil record reveals a history not of macro-evolution of particular species into a

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<sup>52</sup> V. P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 129.

<sup>53</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, 49.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:8.

variety of new species, but rather exhibits massive extinctions, one after another. There is far less diversity today than in the days of Adam and Eve. (Darwin and his followers made an incredible error in logic when they assumed that *minor adaptations* of particular species to their environment [e.g., thicker fur for a cold climate; a thicker beak for breaking nuts; etc.] prove that one species can evolve into a completely new radically different species. God's providential micro-changes to creatures to help them survive climate changes and catastrophes do not prove macro-evolution.)

The fact that the verb "create" (*bara*) is used in verse 21 for the first time since verse 1 is likely designed to underline Jehovah's sovereign role in bringing the fish and fowl into existence. The verb "create" in this context does not necessarily imply a creation out of nothing, for in verse 25 we are told that God "made" the beasts of the earth. The important thing to keep in mind is that all the creatures came to be through miraculous and instantaneous sovereign acts of God and not by means of an impersonal process. On the fifth day, for the first time, a whole new type of creature has come into existence; creatures with circulating blood and beating hearts. Beings that breathe the oxygen in water or in the air; that are not tied to the ground like plants but move freely about of their own volition from place to place. "To give existence to such is the prerogative of God and is a monumental, epoch-making achievement that deserves to be described by the verb 'and He created' (*way-yibra*) as the opening verse does."<sup>55</sup>

The expression "winged bird" (literally "bird of wing") is not only inclusive of mammals or feathered birds but also includes every type of winged creature that most of the liquid air (e.g., insects, bats, birds, extinct reptilian creatures such as the pterodactyl). Every large and small animal that flies is included. It is noteworthy that God creates specific classes of creatures *to fill empty realms* that He has prepared. The modern evolutionary idea of things coming into being from the simple to the complex, from the amoeba to the complex invertebrates, is exploded by Genesis. The simple gnat and the majestic eagle, the tiny krill and the great white shark, are all created at *the exact same time*. Similarly, on day six, God will fill the well planted but creature empty land with animals and creeping creatures of every kind.

## Proclamation and Blessing

Like the other days, after God's creative work is finished, Jehovah looks upon His handiwork and says that "it is good" (v. 21). People who love bird-watching and marvel at the beauty of an ocean reef should thank God for his amazing creation. After God praises His creative work, He addresses the living creatures in order to bless them: "God blessed them, saying, 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth'" (v. 22). The blessing takes the form of an imperative to multiply and, thus, multiplication to fill the waters and the skies with even more life through reproduction is obviously something that pleases God. All the various species are not only to continue but are to have dominion in their own respective spheres. God's blessing implies the power of God to carry through the

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<sup>55</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 80-81.

blessing and this blessing continues to a degree, even today, though under the fall. The curse brought upon the earth by Adam's sin has resulted in many fish, serpents, Leviathan and bird species becoming extinct. (Note, however, that the plan regarding reproduction does not imply that only small numbers of fish or fowl of each kind were created, for the account speaks of great *schools* of sea creatures.) The ability to reproduce is a great blessing from God that enables the various species to spread out and, in a post fall world where death reigns, to survive into the future. "The power of God's providence preserves all things, as at first His creating power produced them. Fruitfulness is the effect of God's blessing and must be ascribed to it; the multiplying of the fish and fowl, from year-to-year, is still the fruit of this blessing."<sup>56</sup> "Divine blessing continues God's benevolent work in creation, and the writer exploits the verbal similarity between the terms to draw attention to the theological relationship. The blessing of God is one of the greatest unifying themes of Genesis. God blesses animals (1:22), mankind (1:28), the Sabbath (2:3), Adam (5:2), Noah (9:1), and frequently the patriarchs (12:3; 17:16, 20, etc.). God's blessing is most obviously visible in the gift of children, as this is often coupled with 'being fruitful and multiplying.' But all aspects of life can express this blessing: crops, family, and nation (Deut. 28:1-14). Where modern man talks of success, OT man talked of blessing."<sup>57</sup>

That God creates animal life in the water and the air and then blesses it, teaches us a number of things about this life. First, these things are created by God for a particular purpose and thus must not be worshiped by man. In the ancient world, many animals were divinized and worshiped as gods because of their abilities and powers. The Egyptians worshiped crocodiles, cats and birds. The Indians of South America worshiped the jaguar. Today in the United States, as the traditional nuclear family is disintegrating, pets have often taken the role of children. The pets give affection, yet require little maturity or responsibility. Moreover, with environmentalism, pets and animals are exalted above man as the dominion mandate is replaced with the worship of nature. Genesis 1 teaches us that animals are wonderful creations of God and that the beauty and marvel of the natural order should cause us to praise, thank and glorify Jehovah for making these things. To attribute the natural order to macro-evolution or impersonal materialistic processes is no better than pagan magic or voodoo. It is an atheistic and blasphemous doctrine. It is the official doctrine of state schools in America because it gives the civil government justification to define reality and create law (positivism) and thus gives the molech state total jurisdiction over man. "The antichristian state makes itself god and therefore sees itself as the source of both law and power. Apart from a biblical perspective, the state becomes another god, and, instead of law, [an autonomous, arbitrary] legality prevails."<sup>58</sup> Modern secular states are fully allied with anti-Christian environmentalist movements because the worship of animals always leads to the divinization of man and the exultation of state power.

Second, the fact that animals are created by God means that all animal life has meaning, purpose, and value. The man who believes that all life evolved from pond scum, that animals are

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<sup>56</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary and the Whole Bible*, 1:8.

<sup>57</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 24.

<sup>58</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 61.

the result of matter plus chance and time, cannot give a reason (that has a logical, coherent, consistent foundation) as to why the animal world should be treated with respect at all. If men want to indiscriminately slaughter the buffalo for fun, then according to atheistic naturalism, why not? If giant agribusinesses want to mistreat chickens, cows and pigs, then according to their worldview in which animals are soulless little machines, why not? (Of course, environmentalists object to the mistreatment of farm animals today, but they do so without a valid or genuine philosophical foundation for their position. They appeal to emotions or arbitrarily divinized animal life. In other words, they engage in mystification. Remember, humanistic rationalism always leads to irrationalism. The rise of atheism leads to the rise of the occult, witchcraft and sorcery.)

The Bible-believing Christian knows from Scripture that, after the flood, men are permitted to use animals for food. But, he understands that because animals are God's creatures, they must not be mistreated or abused. This respect for animals is reflected in God's moral law which reads: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain" (Deut. 25:4). Jehovah here expresses concern for the animal, ordering man to allow the beast to eat from time to time as it works. The animal should not be denied sustenance when working on man's behalf. It should not suffer hunger pangs while walking over food. In addition, the fourth commandment requires men to allow their beasts of burden to have a full day of rest along with their owners (see Ex. 20:10; Deut. 5:14). The idea spread by environmentalists that the dominion mandate of Christianity has led to the rape of the environment and the great abuse of animals is completely untrue. If professing Christians have abused animals, birds or fish and have irresponsibly hunted various species to extinction, then they are violating Scripture and sinning against God who made these creatures, proclaimed them good and blessed them. A study of biblical law and the application of biblical principles to farming or agribusiness will lead to the humane treatment of animals. Animals used for meat will have good lives before they give their lives for food. The animals not only will be much better off, but the quality of our food will greatly improve as well.

## Excursus on the Fossil Record

If the creation account in Genesis is true, then one would expect two different findings in the fossil record: (1) Fully developed complex life forms should appear suddenly in the fossil record. In other words, one should not find the many layers *of the precursors to complex life* in the fossil record; but only layers full of complex, fully developed life forms. (2) The picture of the fossil record (as well as life on earth today) should be one of radical discontinuity. In other words, the thousands or even millions of *transitional life forms* between species that the macro-evolutionary theory predicts should be missing from the fossil record. Indeed, they are.

Charles Darwin (and his scientific contemporaries) understood that that the discovery of transitional forms in the fossil record was central to the credibility of their claims. Darwin had come up with a clever theory but a theory not verified by empirical observation: "At one point [Darwin] observed, 'innumerable transitional forms must have existed but why do we not find

them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?'; in another place he said, 'why is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal such finely graduated organic chain, and this perhaps is the *greatest objection which can be urged against my theory*.'"<sup>59</sup> He knew that the predicted "missing links" between species were absent from the fossil record, but fell back on the argument that, as research progressed, eventually the missing links would be discovered and the theory of evolution verified. This hope spurred the scientific community onward to great amounts of research, not only to discover new fossils, but also "living links" in the unexplored regions of the earth. "Since Darwin's time the search for missing links in the fossil record has continued on an ever-increasing scale. So vast has been the expansion of paleontological activity over the past 100 years that probably 99.9% of all paleontological work has been carried out since 1860."<sup>60</sup> Only a minuscule fraction of the 250,000, or so, fossil species known today were known to Darwin. But virtually all the new fossil species discovered since Darwin's time have either been current species, close relatives of living species (e.g., extinct species of horses, sloths, elephants, bears, bison, tigers, armadillos, various birds, etc.) or extinct species that are strange and bear virtually no resemblance to species living today.

The biblical record predicts abrupt appearances with no intermediate forms while the macro-evolutionary position predicts the opposite. Research to date has overwhelmingly supported the biblical position. Today, there are well over 200 million catalogued specimens of about 250,000 fossil species. Most paleontologists would argue that the current fossil record is sufficient and of such a high quality that one cannot plead ignorance or a lack of information as Darwin and his followers did in the 1860s and 70s. Rather than supporting evolution, systematic abrupt appearances and systematic gaps in the fossil record are clear evidence that evolution did *not* occur, while some kind of special creation did occur. Interestingly, most geologists before Darwin had already noted abrupt appearances and gaps and along with the vast majority of scientists interpreted this evidence as *proof of special creation*. As Leaky notes, "Geologists of the 1830s were convinced that they had discovered the dawn of life in the strata, called the Cambrian, and no hypothesis save *special creation* was deemed adequate to account for the *sudden appearance* of Cambrian and fossils. Rocks older than the Cambrian were, so it seemed, completely devoid of fossils. In the second place, the various strata each generally had its own characteristic fossil flora and fauna and the *transitions between strata were abrupt*..."<sup>61</sup> Even today when macro-evolution is the *a priori* accepted religion of the scientific community, many paleontologists grudgingly acknowledge that the fossil record does not fit the macro-

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<sup>59</sup> Raup, "Conflicts between Darwin and Paleontology," *Field Museum of Natural History Bull.*, Jan. 1979, at 22, 23 (italics added); as quoted in W. R. Bird, *The Origin of Species Revisited: the Theories of Evolution and of Abrupt Appearance* (Nashville, TN: Regency, 1991), 1:50. "In fact, T. H. Huxley, who was 'Darwin's bulldog' wrote that 'if it could be shown that this fact [gaps between widely distinct groups] had always existed, the fact would be *fatal* to the doctrine of evolution'" (Ibid, 1:59). The vast majority of evolutionists and all macro-evolutionary textbooks simply ignore the fact that the fossil record completely contradicts their theory.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, M.D.: Alder and Alder, 1985), 160.

<sup>61</sup> Leaky, "Introduction," to C. Darwin, *The Origin of Species* at 14. C. R. Leaky, ed. 1979 (italics added), as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:50.

evolutionary paradigm. As Davis observes, “The sudden emergence of major adaptive types, as seen in the *abrupt appearance* in the fossil record of *families and orders*, continue to give trouble. The phenomenon lay in the genetical no man’s land beyond the limits of experimentation. A few paleontologists even today cling to the idea that these gaps will be closed by further collecting, i.e., that they are accidents of sampling; but most regard the observed discontinuities as real and have sought an explanation for them.”<sup>62</sup>

In brief, the fossil record supports special creation in the following ways. First, in the fossil record the layers go from no life at all (i.e. strata that are completely devoid of fossils) to the abrupt appearance of highly complex organisms.<sup>63</sup> All sorts of species appear instantaneously in the fossil record with none of the predicted evolutionary precursors. Not only do all sorts of complex plant, animal, fish, amphibian, crustacean species etc. appear suddenly out of nowhere, but there is not a shred of evidence in the fossil record of biological improvement of species over time.

Second, not only does complex life appear suddenly (out of nowhere) in the fossil record, but *every major category of life* appears suddenly without evolutionary links. As Denton notes,

It is still, as it was in Darwin’s day, overwhelmingly true that the first representatives of all the major classes of organisms known to biology are already highly characteristic of their class when they make their initial appearance in the fossil record. This phenomenon is particularly obvious in the case of the invertebrate fossil record. At its first appearance in the ancient paleozoic seas, invertebrate life was already divided into practically all the major groups with which we are familiar today. Not only was every major invertebrate phyla represented, but a good many of their main subgroups were also present. The molluscs, for example, the earliest representatives of the cephalopods (the group including the octopus and squid), of the bivalves (clams and oysters) or gastropods (snails and slugs), etc are all highly differentiated when they burst into the fossil record. Neither the phyla nor their main subdivisions are linked by transitional forms. Robert Barnes summed up the current situation: “...The fossil record tells us almost nothing about the evolutionary origin of the phyla and classes. Intermediate forms are nonexistent, undiscovered, or not recognized.”<sup>64</sup>

Of the 25 major living subdivisions found in the animal kingdom, all appear suddenly. This is true of invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, the so-called lower mammals, primates and

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<sup>62</sup> Davis, “Comparative Anatomy and the Evolution of Vertebrates,” in *Genetics, Paleontology, and Evolution* at 64, 74 (G. Jespsun, E. Mayr & G. Simpson, ed. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1963) (italics added); as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:52.

<sup>63</sup> The fossil record goes from the supposedly early Cambrian layers, which are full of *highly complex* marine invertebrate life forms, to strata containing *absolutely nothing at all*. Geologists have looked at 5000 feet of sedimentary rock that lies below the early Cambrian levels and have found no evidence of life at all—nothing. When we consider that evolutionists postulate that it took 2 billion years for primitive life forms to come into existence, that would eventually evolve into highly complex marine invertebrates, this 2 billion year gap of nothingness becomes an incredible problem. It means the evidence for macro-evolution that their theory predicts is not there. It means the evidence is *contrary* to evolutionary theory. The complete absence of life means that, according to the fossil record, evolution *did not* occur.

<sup>64</sup> [“Invertebrate Beginnings,” *Paleobiology*, 6:365-70] in Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, 162-163.

man. Lizards appear suddenly as lizards. This is true of turtles, frogs, crustaceans, horses, cattle, bison, elephants, bats, rhinoceroses, birds, monkeys, and man. “Modern gorillas, orangutans, and chimpanzees spring out of nowhere, as it were. They are here today; they have no yesterday.”<sup>65</sup> The same could be said of grasses, flowering plants, ferns, and trees. Rather than supporting evolution, the sudden appearance of highly complex life forms *with no precursors in the fossil record* supports the instantaneous creation of species by God. The only reason that the vast majority of scientists today reject this obvious and logical conclusion from the fossil record is that their anti-supernaturalistic presuppositions do not allow for an infinite personal God who creates and rules over His creation. In other words, their *a priori* religious or worldview commitments do not allow them to be objective or truly scientific when it comes to origins. Their paradigm rules out the truth, so they must explain away the evidence (e.g., the punctuated equilibrium theory of Gould), create false evidence (e.g., the erroneous creating of missing links) or, in most cases, simply ignore the evidence. “Intelligent design” is kept out of the public schools because it would destroy the macro-evolutionary paradigm and the atheistic statism and that supports it.

Third, the fossil record is completely devoid of the predicted transitional forms between the so-called lower and higher forms of life. According to macro-evolutionary theory, microorganisms developed into invertebrate animals. The invertebrate animals developed into vertebrate fish. The complex fish developed into amphibians. The amphibians evolved into reptiles. The reptiles eventually developed into birds and lower mammals. The lower mammals evolved into larger more complex mammals who then became primates; and finally primates evolved into man. This process, we are told, took hundreds of millions of years. If evolution occurred (as theorized) the fossil record should contain hundreds of thousands of transitional forms. But the *absence* of transitional forms universally characterizes the fossil record all over the planet earth. The fossil record does not contain a single example of a significant transition. “The statistical significance of these gaps is evident in comparing the quarter billion catalogued fossils with 3-5 kingdoms, 35-50 phyla, 100-130 classes, 600-2, 000 orders of animals, 50,000 vertebrate species, and 600,000 insect species.”<sup>66</sup> “*Evolution requires intermediate forms between species and paleontology does not provide them.*”<sup>67</sup> T. H. Huxley, who was called “Darwin’s bulldog” and chief apologist, openly acknowledged that “if it could be shown that this fact [gaps between widely distinct groups] had always existed, the effect would be *fatal* to the doctrine of evolution.”<sup>68</sup> A notable paleontologist from Imperial College says, “It must be significant that nearly all the evolutionary stories I learned as a student...have now been

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<sup>65</sup> D. Johansen and M. Edey, *Lucy: the Beginnings of Humankind* (1981), italics added, as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:56.

<sup>66</sup> R. Blackwelder, *Taxonomy*, 446 (1967), as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:59.

<sup>67</sup> Kitts, “Paleontology and Evolutionary Theory,” 30, *Journal of Paleontology*, 458, 467 (1974), italics added, as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:59.

<sup>68</sup> T. Huxley, *Three Lectures on Evolution*, 619 (1882), as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:59.

‘debunked.’ Similarly, my own experience of more than 20 years looking for evolutionary lineages among the Mesozoic Brachiopoda has proved them equally elusive.”<sup>69</sup>

Think of any of the complex life forms we know today and the great deal of time and the many intermediate species that would be required to form such amazing creatures if evolution were true. But all these complex life forms exist *without leaving any fossil traces of the steps of the evolutionary transformation*: horses appear with no precursors; also elephants, sloths, bats, fish, birds, giraffes, monkeys, apes, whales, crocodiles, etc. Evolutionists like to point to the *Archaeopteryx* as a precursor to birds, but it itself is merely an odd looking extinct bird. “The famous fossil forms of *Archaeopteryx* and *Archaeornis* of the upper Jurassic are *already birds*, with well-developed wing and tail feathers, and the power of flight.”<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the *Archaeopteryx* is found in the fossil record along with “modern” birds. They like to appeal to certain extinct fish as well, but this argument is useless because: a) The question is how did they become fish in the first place. There is not a trace in the fossil record of any swimming creatures with the precursors of fins which are highly complex in construction and movement as well as the fish jaw structure which is very complicated and unique. There were fish and before there were fish there was nothing. b) The so-called “primitive” fish have “modern” counterparts that are alive and well such as the coelacanths, sturgeons and lungfish. (Coelacanths were supposedly extinct for hundreds of millions of years, until they were discovered off the coast of Africa in the 1950s.) The evolutionist cannot demonstrate evolution from the fossil record, for the many thousands of new species discovered in the 20th century only reveal highly specialized and fully formed *extinct sister species*, not transitional species. A woolly mammoth is an extinct elephant. A giant land sloth is an extinct sloth. A saber-toothed tiger is an extinct tiger. There are extinct amphibians that bear a striking resemblance to newts or salamanders. Denton writes,

The virtual complete absence of intermediate and ancestral forms from the fossil record is today recognized widely by many leading paleontologists as one of the most striking characteristics, so much so that those authorities who have adopted the cladistic framework now take it as axiomatic, that, in attempting to determine the relationships of fossil species, in the

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<sup>69</sup> Ager, “The Nature of the Fossil Record,” 87, *Proc. of Geological Association*, 131, 132 (1976), italics added, as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:61.

<sup>70</sup> E. Russell, “The Archaeopteryx Flap,” *Natural History*, Sept. 1986, 16, 18, as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:218. “Macro-evolution from reptiles to birds is not supported by fossil evidence, as Swinton (an international expert) states: ‘The origin of birds is largely a matter of deduction. There is *no fossil evidence* of the stages through which the remarkable change from reptiles to bird was achieved’” [Swinton, *Biology in Comparative Physiology of Birds*, I A. Marshall, ed. 1960), italics added]. “Yet that transformation required an incredible number of changes, and the various stages should have left fossil remains: To grasp how much such cases entail, consider the major components of reptile-to-bird; development of feathers, which are very complicated objects; reform of the respiratory system; reform of the skeletal system, with the bones becoming porous, hollow, and in many cases fused; reform of the digestive system to allow increased fuel consumption while economising on weight; reform of the nervous system, especially the brain and the eyeball; construction of bills and beaks; mastery of nest building; and, finally, acquisition of flight and all the homing capacities. Any one of these components would be hard to visualize, but when all have to go forward together while keeping the organisms in operation at all times, the *difficulties become overwhelming...*” [Macbeth, “The Hypothesis of Divergent Ancestry,” 5, *Historia Natural*, 321, 322 (1985), italics added, as quoted in W. R. Bird, 216-217.

words of a recent British Museum publication: “we assume that none of the fossil species we are considering is the ancestor of the other.” [British Museum, “Natural History” (1980), *Man’s Place in Evolution*, 20].

The fossils have not only failed to yield the host of transitional forms demanded by evolution theory, but because nearly all extinct species and groups revealed by paleontology are quite distinct and isolated as they burst into the record, the number of hypothetical connecting links to join its diverse branches is necessarily greatly increased.<sup>71</sup>

In other words, the more the paleontologists have discovered in the fossil record, the more proof we have that evolution is simply untrue. It is a myth held by faith, contrary to fact.

Fourth, macro-evolutionary theory is disproved by the widespread *stasis* or sameness of various species that can be found in the different layers of the fossil record. This is even true of the various species found in the strata that still exist today. The supposedly oldest fossil bacteria found in “pre-Cambrian” layers, which is dated at “1.9 billion years old,” is identical to bacteria alive today. (We reject modern “scientific” dating methods but use them here to prove the absurdity of their own position.) The fossil wings of insects such as flies and dragonflies in supposedly very ancient layers are the same as the species today. Fossil cockroaches are virtually identical to modern forms. The modern horseshoe crab is the same as the “very ancient” fossil form. Modern squid are basically identical to squid that are supposedly 400 million years old. Mollusks, snails, nautilus and coral are the same. Many insects, including ants, are the same as those found in exceptionally old layers. Several fish species that are found in layers dated over 100 million years old are still with us today such as sharks, bowfins, sturgeon and lungfish. A number of species thought to be extinct for several million years have been found alive and well such as the coelacanths. Modern coelacanths are *identical* to those in the fossil record. Amphibians such as frogs and toads have not changed from ones that are supposed to be 65 million years old. Crocodiles and alligators are called living fossils because they are the same as the “ancient” forms that walked with the earliest dinosaurs. Various lizards and turtles are virtually the same as well. Mammals such as bats, rats, mice and squirrels, like the other species, forgot to evolve. One could mention elephants, elephant shrews, tree shrews, tarsiers, bovid, tapers, opossums, camels, pangolins, porcupines and aardvarks. In fact, enough was known about the fossil record in Darwin’s own day that paleontologists and geologists saw in the fossil record exceptionally strong empirical evidence that all the various species appear full-blown suddenly and then endure unchanged, with some becoming extinct, while others continue to live into the modern period. Once again, the fossil record where animals and plants appear suddenly out of nowhere and then exhibit no new mutational or directional change during their long tenure on earth fits the creation account perfectly. God created the animals and they reproduce after their kind. The fossil record is one of *instant appearance* of thousands of fully developed complex species followed by complete *species stability*. Species are not observed evolving over vast

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<sup>71</sup> Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, 165-166. Stanley writes, “The known fossil record fails to document a *single example of phyletic (gradual) evolution accomplishing a major morphologic transition* and hence offers no evidence that the gradualist model can be valid,” as quoted in Denton, 182.

stretches of time but instead remain *unchanged*. “If ever there was a myth, it is that evolution is a process of constant change.”<sup>72</sup> “[T]he historical evidence accessible all goes to prove the immutability of species. The earliest historical records and the oldest monuments prove that all extant animals [are now] what they [were] thousands of years ago.... [Moreover,] the fact that hybrids cannot be perpetuated, that no device of man can produce a new species, is proof that God has fixed limits which cannot be passed. This Huxley himself admits to be in an insuperable objection.”<sup>73</sup>

Darwinism and macro-evolutionary theory is the belief without any evidence. It has done more to pervert and corrupt modern science than any other humanly derived hypothesis. It really is a religious belief imposed on clear and abundant evidence to the contrary. Darwin advanced highly speculative theories that were falsifiable in his day and have been completely obliterated since, not simply by Christian scientists, but also by secular scientists who are honest about their research. Since theories proven false belong to the realm of fantasy and metaphysics, one can conclude that macro-evolutionary theories are not empirical or scientific theories at all, but are a religious faith. One should look at macro-evolution is another religious myth about origins such as the foolishness of the Babylonians, Hindus or Mayan Indians. It is couched in the terminology of science but it is no more scientific than the *Enuma Elish* in which Marduk created the earth by first conquering and slaying the monster Tiamat and cutting her corpse in half. People cling to that which is irrational <sup>74</sup> and obviously contrary to the empirical evidence because they are unwilling to face the obvious fact of special creation by an infinite personal God (Yahweh). Unregenerate men cling to the absurd with an obstinate dogmatism and blind faith because they love darkness and hate the light. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18).

## The Sixth Day

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, the beast of the earth after his kind”: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he Him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the

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<sup>72</sup> Gould, “Evolution’s Erratic Pace,” *Natural History*, May 1977, 13, 14, as quoted in W. R. Bird, 1:69.

<sup>73</sup> Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism? And Other Writings on Science and Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, [1874] 1994), 147.

<sup>74</sup> There are a number of things that evolutionary theory can never overcome but are blind leaps of faith: (1) the step from the surface of the earth bathed in deathly radiation to life that produces an atmosphere that protects from radiation; (2) the step from dead matter to living organisms; (3) the step from plant life to animal life; (4) the step from one species to another species. All of these things are clearly impossible, have not occurred and will never occur.

fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” And God said, “Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and every fowl of the air, and everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat”: and it was so. And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Genesis 1:24-31).

## **Introduction**

The sixth day consists of two separate, yet related, creative acts: the making of all land creatures and finally the creation of man, the pinnacle of the whole creation. Like the previous days, the creative work on this day corresponds to the work of the third day when dry land appeared and was covered with vegetation. Unlike the fifth day where the mediate fashioning of water and air creatures is only implied; here the mediate nature of the creative act is explicit: the earth is bidden to bring forth (“let the earth produce”) the land creatures. Once again, God calls forth a new stage of creation by His creative word: “And God said.”

When we speak of God bringing all the animal life out of the ground, we must avoid thinking that the power to produce animal life was within the earth itself; or, that God used some kind of evolutionary process. Like the other days, this was a sovereign, miraculous, instantaneous act, not a long drawn out process. Jehovah spoke and it was done. God merely used the substance to fashion the animals and man that He had created out of nothing in the beginning. We must be careful to follow the teaching of our text, which is simple, and avoid importing pagan philosophies like evolution into this account.

The creation of man contains the fullest description of the days, for, in it, creation reaches its purpose and climax. Only man is made in God's image and only man is given dominion over the rest of creation. This section (vs. 24-31) contains four divine speeches, twice as many as on any other day. It all also contains a special approbation that reinforces the specialness of this day as bringing God's special creation to its conclusion: “God saw... that it was really very good.”

## **The Creation of Land Animals**

In the creation of the land creatures God makes a general statement, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature,” followed by a specification of three kinds of land creatures: “cattle and creeping things and beast.” The general title “living creature” means literally “soul of life.” These creatures are not like plants but breathe, move, see and think. The living souls of animals are not spiritual like the souls of man. Animals function much more on instinct and are incapable of complex language, reasoning capabilities and detailed planning and foresight for the future. Thus, they do not develop cultures or civilizations. They eat, breed, live and, as a consequence of the fall, die. While animals are far below man, they are still amazing creatures with exceptional capabilities. Animals learn and know the environment around them. A dog, cat or horse knows

its owner and exhibits trust and (under normal circumstances) exhibits a kind of friendship towards him. Animals have a kind of memory and know what is harmful and what brings reward. They can communicate with each other to an extent with warnings, and knowledge of food and so forth. Some animals will defend their young to the point of death. Animals make rudimentary homes (ants, bees and termites make amazing structures through ingrained instinct); and, appear to enjoy God's creation. As living souls created by God, animals must not be worshiped nor treated with cruelty. Before the fall, they were to be studied, used for agriculture and wool, and enjoyed, but not used for food.

God divides the land creatures into three categories. The first is *behemah*, which in the Hebrew Scriptures is used primarily of large domesticated animals such as cattle. Its root meaning is "to be dumb" (ancient and modern farmers and ranchers do not consider livestock to be particularly intelligent). Although the term can be used of other animals, in this context it is contrasted with wild beasts of the earth (*chayyath ha'arets*) and thus virtually all commentators believe domesticated animals are in view. These all are meek creatures that have a nature that allows them to live and even work with man. (Gill includes in this class, "horses, asses, camels, oxen, sheep.")<sup>75</sup>

The second class is described as *remes* which is often translated "creeping things" and comes from a root which means "to move about lightly." It covers many creatures such as insects, lizards, snakes, mice, rats, voles, rabbits and so on. These creepers keep close to the ground and seemed to glide on the earth. A good modern translation would be "creatures that move along the ground." "Everything, therefore, large or small, that moves upon the earth or close to the earth, having but short legs may be said to be included."<sup>76</sup>

The third class of animals are *chayyath ha'arets* which simply means "living creatures of the land." Scholars generally regard them as wild animals, for they are animals that roam about the earth. This would include everything from lions, tigers, wolves, gorillas, jackals, hyenas and the like. The term "wild" does not appear in the Hebrew but the expression "living creatures" is used in the Old Testament to distinguish wilderness animals from those which are tame or domesticated. Thus, it is noteworthy that God speaks the animals into existence in such a manner that would make sense to an ancient Hebrew looking at the animal world. (An important thing to keep in mind is that these three expressions are intended to be fully inclusive of every creature that lives on the land, man excluded.) The mentioning of domesticated animals is intended to convey the idea that God has created the animals that men need to live prosperous and fulfilling lives as servants of God on this earth. The Hebrews were animal herders throughout most of their history. When Pharaoh asks Joseph's brothers their occupation they answered, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers" (Gen. 47:3). In the ancient Middle East, wealth and prosperity were associated with the size of one's flocks and herds. In the ceremonial laws, only domesticated food animals (except clean birds in the case of the poverty-stricken) were permitted to be offered in sacrifice. Once again, the expression "after their kind" is used to indicate that

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<sup>75</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 84.

<sup>76</sup> Gill, 1:10.

Jehovah made the animals to remain as they were created and thus the text rules out “theistic evolution” and other erroneous humanly devised theories.

In verse 25 we have the fulfillment of the creative word given in verse 24 but in reverse order (24, cattle and creeping things, wild animals; 25, wild animals, cattle and creeping things; this is a chiasmic inversion, a common Hebrew idiom). Unlike, the air and water creatures (v. 22) as well as man, there is no blessing pronounced on the land animals; or a command to be fruitful and multiply. It is likely that the blessing pronounced upon man (v. 28) was inclusive of all the works on the sixth day in that man's role of dominion implies the blessing on the land animals. The land animals were created on the sixth day, the same day as man, because both man and the land creatures are to fill up and use the empty landscape. Moreover, the land animals function in much closer relationship to man, in particular the domesticated animals. They dwell with man and are used by man for godly dominion.

This is seen in God's moral law where having compassion on a brother's hurt or distressed animal is not simply an act of compassion on the beast of burden but an act of love toward a brother: “You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again” (Deut. 22:4). Interestingly, the moral law instructs man that he has a moral obligation to protect the continuation of animal species by engaging in food collecting practices that do not lead to a serious diminution of a particular animal's numbers or its eventual extinction. In other words, God did not create animals for man to abuse or slaughter but rather to manage and nurture for God's glory and man's benefit. As Deuteronomy 22:6-7 reads, “If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days.” Although the ancient Jews regarded this commandment as the least of God's moral laws, it contains the same promise attached to the fifth commandment (one of the greatest and most important commands), for disobedience in this kind of matter shows contempt for God's handiwork. As Jesus Himself noted when He said, “Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God” (Lk. 12:6). We are not to be careless, mean or cruel to the animal creation. To take great pleasure in destroying the beautiful creatures that Jehovah made to share the land with us is morally perverse and will result in God's judgment. In addition, it teaches us that a crucial part of the dominion mandate is to show compassion to the animal creation by managing it for its own prosperity. We are to be stewards of God's creation, not thoughtless plunderers.

After creating all the animals and insects that dwell on the face of the whole earth, Jehovah looked at his handiwork and declared it good (v. 25). Everything from the ant to the sloth to the platypus meets with God's approval. You must not look upon any of the Lord's creatures as defective or without purpose. The insect and animal world with all its beauty, diversity, multiplicity of function and harmony with the created order shows forth God's infinite wisdom and goodness.

## The Creation of Man

The creation of man is the climax of the created narrative. Everything in the chapter thus far has been leading to this point. In this account there are four things that set man apart from the rest of creation is unique; that demonstrate his exalted status in God's plan.

First, a meeting or divine council of the members of the trinity precedes the creation of man: "Let Us make man in Our image..." (v. 26). To the creation of mankind and the re-creation of the elect in Christ—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit consent. God speaks in the plural (us/our), *not* because Jehovah is addressing his heavenly court and *most certainly not* because of the supposed remnants of polytheism; but because the creation of man "was a more signal and immediate act of divine wisdom and power than that of the other creatures."<sup>77</sup> The revelation of an inner-trinitarian council indicates more solemnity and importance to the event. It is not that making man was more difficult, for nothing is difficult to God, who is infinite in power and wisdom. But, rather, it conveys to the readers a greater honor and dignity, for man was not made like any of the other creatures already made, but was made as near as possible in finite form to the likeness and image of God. "From every point of view man is seen to be the crowning climax of God's creation."<sup>78</sup> The trinitarian expression of council shows us that man is the most perfect, amazing and chief of the works of Jehovah in this world.

Second, unlike the animals, man is created in the image of God: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness" (v. 26a). The word "image" (Hebrew, *selem*; LXX, *eikōn* [icon]) is used of idolatrous images (i.e. miniature crude replicas of false gods; e.g., see Num. 35:52; 2 Kgs. 11:18; 2 Chron. 23:17; Ezek. 7:20; 16:17; 23:14; Amos 5:26); models of tumors (1 Sam. 6:5) or pictures of man (Ezek. 16:17). Clearly, in this context it cannot refer to anything physical, for God is a spiritual being and does not have the body or physical form of any kind (cf. John 4:24). The word "likeness" (*demut*) is an abstract noun that is related to the verb "to be like, resemble." "Likeness" either is used synonymously with "image" and/or is intended to help explain what is meant by image. The idea that image refers to certain qualities in man while likeness refers to other attributes is pure speculation.<sup>79</sup> It is probable that "'likeness' is simply

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<sup>77</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:9.

<sup>78</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 86.

<sup>79</sup> "Iraeneus and Tertullian drew a distinction between 'image' and 'likeness' of God, finding the former in bodily traits, and the latter the spiritual nature of man. Clement of Alexandria and Origen, however, rejected the idea of any bodily analogy, and held that the word 'image' denoted characteristics of man as man, and the word 'likeness,' qualities which are not essential to man, but may be cultivated or lost. This view is also found in Athanasius, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, and John of Damascus. According to Pelagius and his followers the image consisted merely in this, that man is endowed with reason, so that he could know God; with free will, so that he was able to choose and do the good; and with the necessary power to rule the lower creation. The distinction already made by some of the early Church Fathers between the image and the likeness of God, was continued by the Scholastics, though it was not always expressed in the same way. The former was conceived of as including the intellectual powers of reason and freedom, and the latter as consisting of original righteousness. To this was added another point of distinction, namely, that between the image of God as a natural gift to man, something belonging to the very nature of man as man, and the likeness of God, or original righteousness, is a supernatural gift, which served as a check on the lower nature of man. There was a difference of opinion as to whether man was endowed with this original righteousness at once at creation, or received it later on as a reward for a temporary obedience. It was this original righteousness that

added to indicate the precise nuance of ‘image’ in this context.”<sup>80</sup> That these words are essentially synonyms is indicated by the fact that in verse 27 only the word “image” is used. In Genesis 5:1 only the term “likeness” occurs, but then in verse 3 both terms are used. Again in Genesis 9:6 only the word “image” is used. The New Testament uses both “image” (1 Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10) and “likeness” (Jas. 3:9). The use of the two phrases “in our image” and “after our likeness” is a classic instance of Hebrew parallelism where the same thing is said in slightly different ways. Interestingly, verses 26 and 27 simply state the fact that man is made in God’s image without defining what is meant by this description. Attempts to discern exactly what is meant by the statement must be derived from the narrow and broader context of Scripture.

In the narrow context, there are a number of things that set man apart from the animals; that make him like God. Adam had intellectual powers, knowledge, reasoning capabilities and the ability to communicate complex language that animals do not. In the command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we see that man has a moral nature. Adam and Eve had a relationship with Jehovah that was unique. They had a special relationship with God. Moreover, given the fact that God gave Adam dominion over the lower creation immediately after making him, one could argue that man has a glory and honor that is part of his being.

The broader context of Scripture tells us a lot about the image of God in man. First, the image consists of the fact that man has a spirit or soul which has the qualities of sympathy, spirituality, and invisibility and immortality.<sup>81</sup> In Genesis 2:7, we are told that Jehovah “formed man of the dust of the ground,” and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man

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enabled man to merit eternal life. The Reformers rejected the distinction between the image and the likeness, and considered original righteousness as included in the image of God, and as belonging to the very nature of man in its original condition” (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, (1949) 1958], 202).

<sup>80</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 30.

<sup>81</sup> When Reformed confessions and theologians speak of the immortality of the human soul, they do not mean the same thing as the ancient Greek philosophers. The Greeks believed men’s souls were both *eternal* and immortal. There were even a few church fathers such as Origen who believed in the preexistence of human souls. But when orthodox theologians speak of the immortality of the human soul, they do not refer to preexistence or eternality because they understand that every soul is created by God and thus has a beginning in history. There was a time for all of us when we did not exist. Therefore, when Christian theologians use the word “immortality,” they mean that Jehovah created man with the capacity to live forever. The saints will live forever with God and the wicked will live forever in the lake of fire. Moreover, when theologians use the word “immortal,” they are not claiming that human souls are intrinsically immortal but that they live on forever because God uses His power to sustain them forever. If God withdrew His power for even a nanosecond, all men would immediately disappear.

In addition, when Christians speak of the soul’s immortality, they are referring only to the fact that human souls will continue to exist forever. The Bible also speaks about death as a consequence of sin, and eternal life as only belonging to those who believe in Christ and thus obtain His saving benefits. Thus, while in some sense all human souls are moral and exist forever; in another sense, souls that exist *separated* from God due to sin experience spiritual and physical death. Adam was created in a position where he would have lived forever in a *blessed state* only if he continued in obedience to God. His eternal life was not absolute but conditional. Thus, while Adam had true knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and lived in perfect communion with God, he did not have the gift of perseverance and he lost the opportunity to obtain glorified life that included the ability never to commit sin when he violated God’s command. It is Christ, the second Adam, who gives us glorified life that can never be lost through His death and resurrection. With all this in mind, we could say that only true Christians possess a blessed immortality while all unbelievers possess a cursed immortality. (Keep in mind that the word “immortal” means literally “incapable of mortality.” Therefore, while unbelievers’ souls never cease to exist, their state of immortality is one of death in all its aspects, not life and blessedness with God.)

became a *living soul* (*nepes hayya*; Gr. *psyche zōsa*). Man has a physical component and a spiritual aspect. Man's body is made from the earth and thus he is an earthly creature. As Paul says, "The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). Man is "spirit" because, unlike the animals who simply come forth from the earth, he had the breath of life breathed into him by God (Gen. 2:7). Jehovah directly imparted into him his life principle (Ecc. 12:7). The conscious activities of thought are thus attributed to man's soul or spirit (Num. 21:4; Ps. 139:13ff; Ps. 77:6; Prov. 19:2; 17:27; Job 21:4; 1 Sam. 1:10; Isa. 54:6 1 Cor. 2:11; Lk. 1:46-47; etc. In the Bible, soul and spirit are used synonymously [i.e. they are repeatedly used in a parallel or interchangeable manner]. Trichothomism, or man viewed as possessing three separate elements [body, soul and spirit], was adopted by certain post-apostolic authors due to the importance of neo-platonic philosophy.). When men die, their souls depart from their body. They surrender their soul or spirit unto God (e.g., see Gen. 25:18; 1 Kgs. 17:21; Ps. 31:5; Mt. 20:28; 27:50; Lk. 8:55; 23:46; Ac. 7:59; 15:26; 20:10) and thus the dead are called souls (Rev. 6:9; 20:4).

The immortality of the soul did not come from Greek thought but is based squarely in Scripture: "The dust [man's dead body] will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). There is an eternity awaiting all men in heaven or in hell. The fact that we have an immaterial aspect that is spiritual is significant, for it enables us to have a spiritual relationship with God. Animals do not speak to God in prayer, meditate on Yahweh's attributes or praise the Lord with Psalms. God walked and talked with Adam in the garden (Gen. 2:16; 3:8). He did not commune in such a way with apes, aardvarks or goats. Our souls are gifts of special creation so that we would love and serve God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength (cf. Deut. 6:5).

Bavinck speaks eloquently on the organic oneness and uniqueness of man as a soul and body:

But man is "soul," because from the very beginning the spiritual component in him (unlike that of the angels) is adapted to and organized for a body and is bound, also for his intellectual and spiritual life, to the sensory and external faculties; because he can rise to the higher faculties only from a substratum of the lower ones; and hence, because he is a sentient and material being and as such is related to the animals. Man is a rational animal, a thinking reed, a being existing between angels and animals, related to but distinct from both. He unites and reconciles within himself both heaven and earth, things both invisible and visible. And precisely as such he is the image and likeness of God. God is most certainly "spirit," and in this respect also the angels are related to him. But sometimes there is reference also to his soul, and throughout Scripture all the peculiar psychic feelings and activities that are essentially human are also attributed to God. In Christ, God assumed the nature of humanity, not that of angels. And precisely on that account man, rather than the angels, is the image, son, and offspring of God. The spirituality, invisibility, unity, simplicity, and immortality of the human soul are all features of the image of

God. This image itself emerges in the fact that he has a spirit (*pneuma*), which was from the beginning organized into a soul (*psychē*).<sup>82</sup>

Reformed theologians even speak of the human body as an aspect of the image of God, not regarding its physical substance, but as the organ or extension of man's soul. Man's soul (except in heaven or hell prior to the second coming) works through the human brain and nervous system. (It sees through the eyes, feels through the hands and skin, moves with the feet and hears with the ears.) God's glory and dominion is exercised by divine fiat but man's body is the instrument by which he serves God and exercises dominion over the lower creation. The human body in present earthly form cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50), but Christ will change our present physical bodies into spiritual bodies and thus, in a very real sense, our bodies share in the immortality of the soul.

Second, the image of God also consists in the attributes, powers or faculties that we possess as rational and moral creatures. The Bible sums up the whole nature of man by speaking of his heart. It is the center of man's being—the seat and foundation of man's entire consciousness. From the heart flow “the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23). Out of man's heart flow awareness, wisdom, knowledge, rationality perception and thought. This is why men speak, use language, do mathematics, make plans and do analysis. The heart is also the seat of desires, motives, passions and decisions of the will. All men, by virtue of their creation by God, share in His communicable attributes on a finite level. The very diversity and abundance of all the complex forces that make up man reflect the God who made man. For example, men have an innate ability to use reason, make logical inferences, learn and build knowledge from a study of his surroundings. While God already knows everything and does not grow or change in any way; thought, logic or reason are rooted in who God is. This aspect of our nature enables us to exercise dominion over the lower creation and develop agriculture, husbandry, science, technology and architecture. It also enables us to develop systematic theology—the queen of all sciences. Man also has the ability to use complex, abstract language. This is not only necessary for daily communication between men but is also necessary to pass this information on to future generations. Man's dominion, his progress, is thus made cumulative. The manliness of man, even after the fall, has resulted in a steady progress of invention, development and culture throughout human history. Men have a likeness to God in their incredible creativity. Human history is full of the creation of amazing works of art, music, tools, weaponry, technology, literature, architecture, and modes of transportation. Human beings also image God in their multifaceted and complex emotions. While certain animal show emotions in a very rudimentary and instinctual manner, people experience a full range of complex and thoughtful emotions: joy, happiness, sadness, fear, anger. Emotions make us truly human and, when our emotions are kept in line with Scripture, they help us serve God and our fellow man. The sinless Son of God, who was fully God and truly man, experienced a whole range of emotions without sin. In addition,

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<sup>82</sup> Herman Bavinck (John Vriend, translator), *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 2:556.

men have a true sense of time and history. They contemplate the past and make plans for the future.

We see the amazing richness of who God made us and how it relates not only to our ability to glorify God by keeping the dominion mandate, but also in our ability to have fellowship with the infinite, personal and living God of Scripture. While God certainly did not make man because He was lonely or needed fellowship (a being who is infinite in perfections and ontological needs nothing outside of Himself), nevertheless when, out of His sovereign good pleasure, He decided to make man, He did so in such a manner as to make fellowship between God and man rich and blessed. “Precisely because man is a wonderfully and richly endowed and organized he can be conformed to and enjoy God in the fullest manner from all sides, as it were, in all God’s virtues and perfections.”<sup>83</sup> “The more we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize, and the more fully we will understand what Scripture means when it says that man is in the image of God. The expression refers to every way in which man is like God.”<sup>84</sup>

Third, the image of God consists in certain virtues that were lost in the fall, but restored in Christ. Theologians refer to this as the image of God in the narrow sense. Paul tells us that our renewal in Christ consists in a restoration of true righteousness, holiness, and knowledge of God. Two key texts speak to this topic. Ephesians 4:21-24 reads, “You...have been taught by Him...[to] put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness.” The parallel passage in Colossians says, “You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (3:10).

It is clear that Paul had the original creation of man (from Genesis 1:26-27) in mind when he wrote these words. By determining precisely what man lost in the fall but then was restored in redemption, theologians have a clear picture of certain “image virtues.” Before he fell, Adam had a true knowledge of God (the word “knowledge” [Gr. *epignōsin*] has this meaning in Col. 1:6, 9, 27-28). Before sin, Adam was in a right relationship with God and had an intrinsic and true knowledge of his Creator. Adam’s knowledge, although true, pure and perfect, was finite or limited. It was capable of incredible growth. Adam not only had innate knowledge but also was immediately given the knowledge of special revelation. These two kinds of knowledge were to complement each other as Adam walked by faith and grew in maturity. Adam’s knowledge of God was to be one of perpetual growth, satisfaction and love.

Adam was also created possessing righteousness (*dikaiosynē*). He not only had an innate sense of righteousness, morality and justice (i.e. the work of the whole moral law was written upon his heart [Rom. 2:15]), but had an intrinsic ability and desire as part of his nature to obey God’s law. He was given a moral rectitude toward God and man. It was built into his being.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 2:557.

<sup>84</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 443.

Adam's righteousness and holiness were his from the moment of his creation. He was created for the purpose of good works, for establishing justice throughout the whole earth. "Good fruits presuppose a good tree; one must first *be* before he can *do*... But that increased righteousness and holiness must nevertheless still, be kept, developed and converted into action."<sup>85</sup> It is generally recognized by Reformed theologians that man, in the state of integrity, possessed virtues of knowledge and righteousness by and in the Holy Spirit. However, for Adam, who was sinless and intrinsically righteous and holy, the indwelling and fellowship of the Spirit was completely natural.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, Adam possessed "holiness" (*hosiotēti*). He was created with piety in his heart toward God. From the first moment of his existence, he had a right relationship with God. He lived in faithfulness and love toward Jehovah and thus had perfect fellowship with him. These virtues make it clear that the image of God in man must be defined as relating, not simply to man's being, but also his relationship to God and his fellow man (on the sixth day this applied to his relationship with Eve and vice versa). God created Adam with a creaturely and finite, but genuine, knowledge of God; a true righteousness and justice toward his neighbor; and a real piety or holiness toward God. Adam was created as a faithful disciple of Jehovah, ready to grow and spread the knowledge of God, holiness and justice throughout the whole earth.

The image of God in man shows that Adam came into this world in a state of blessedness. True holiness, righteousness and knowledge accompanies walking and talking with God in the garden, happiness and fruitful work in paradise. These gifts of virtue give life meaning and purpose. In the creation account, step-by-step God is fashioning and organizing the world until day six when He brings it to completion. On this day it achieves its unity, goal, purpose and its crown in humanity.

### **The Image of God after the Fall**

When considering the image of God in man, it is necessary to look at how man's fall into sin has affected that image. There are a number of things relating to this topic that we need to

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<sup>85</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:558. Given Adam's natural state before the fall, one of the most difficult questions regarding the early chapters of Genesis theologically and philosophically is: How did Adam, who was created upright, good and holy with an innate knowledge of truth and morality and an intrinsic desire to love and please Jehovah, commit sin? A tree is known by its fruit (cf. Mt. 7:17, 20) and Adam was a good tree that produced bad fruit. Although this question can never receive a full and comprehensive answer, theologians point out that Adam, in his pre-fall state, had a genuine free will and that: a) his heart was not enslaved to sin and thus depraved; and b) although sinless, he was not glorified and thus was able to sin and fall.

<sup>86</sup> The indwelling of the Spirit before and after the fall is radically different. Before the fall, the Holy Spirit's indwelling was natural and harmonious, for man's spirit was intrinsically righteous, good and holy. After the fall, the Spirit's work in man is "above nature," miraculous and salvific. The Spirit comes to hearts that are dead, dark and hostile to God and (based on the efficacy of Jesus' death and resurrection) cleanses and renews them. The Spirit of God comes from without and is diametrically opposed to our sinful natures. He comes to apply Jesus' saving work against the sinful nature and constantly in conjunction with His holy word works to subdue it.

examine. First, contrary to certain schools of thought,<sup>87</sup> Scripture still regards man as God's image after the fall. This point is proved by God's justification for the death penalty for murder given to Noah after the flood: Jehovah says, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:6). An attack upon man is, in a sense, an indirect attack upon God himself, for man is God's image. In the New Testament, James, speaking of men in general not just Christians, says that, "they have been made in the likeness of God" (3:9). Obviously then, the fall has not completely obliterated the image of God in man.

Second, although man is still in the image of God, after the fall this image is greatly marred in a number of ways. (1) Fallen men (who are unsaved) have lost the image of God *in the narrow sense*. Man is no longer righteous or morally pure, but rather wicked, selfish and evil. Man's depraved heart, which delights in sin and suppresses the truth about God in unrighteousness, is not like God at all. Man is still a creature with a sense of right and wrong or morality; but his depraved nature cannot love Jehovah, or do anything with pure motives or with a genuine desire to love and glorify God. As Paul says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7-8). It is no longer holy and, thus, has no true piety toward God whatsoever. Instead of the heart being naturally holy and a spring of devotion and piety, it is now foul and polluted. "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). "The [human] heart is... desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). "From within, out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication's, murders (Mk. 7:21)." The eagle obeys God's laws and the swallows fly to Capistrano when God tells them to. But when he told Jonah to go to Nineveh, he headed for Tarshish. We disobey God instinctively, whereas dumb animals obey him instinctively. Disobedience is our nature."<sup>88</sup> When Adam sinned, he lost his original righteousness and positive holiness. This loss was passed on to all his posterity except Jesus Christ, who was born of a virgin. Although mankind lost something that belonged to man in his ideal state, he still remains man and formally possesses the image of God.

Adam and his posterity also lost the true knowledge of God. Man's intellect is corrupted with all sorts of lies and perversions regarding God. Paul says that unregenerate men suppress the truth about God in unrighteousness and do so by creating idols and false gods (Rom. 1:18ff). Men walk in darkness and hate the light because their minds are darkened and enslaved to the devil—the father of lies (cf. Jn. 3:19-20). "The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have all altogether become corrupt; there is none who does good, no not one" (Ps. 14:2-3). "There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God" (Rom. 3:11). "Do we not understand,

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<sup>87</sup> Most Lutheran theologians have traditionally defined God's image in a very narrow sense, only including man's original righteousness. Since "original righteousness" has been lost in the fall they believe the image of God has been lost as well.

<sup>88</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Truths We Confess: A Layman's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2006), 1:137.

what it means to be ignorant of God, not to understand, not to seek God, not to fear God, to go out of the way and to be unprofitable? Are not the words perfectly clear? and do they not teach that all men are ignorant of God and despise God, and moreover go out of the way after evil, and are unprofitable for good?”<sup>89</sup> After the fall, men are still very religious, but apart from Christ who restores men to true knowledge, men forge their philosophies, worldviews and concepts of deity out of hate and rebellion towards the true God.

### **The Restoration of God’s Image through Christ**

In the Bible we learn that God did not leave all men in the state of sin, misery and death, but sent His Son to restore the image of God in the elect. Believers will be redeemed and progressively restored to the image of Christ, who is the perfect image of God. Paul says that Jesus “is...the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4); “He is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). In the Savior, according to His sinless human nature, we see exactly what God intends His people to be. Thus, we should not be surprised that God “predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:29). The beginning of this transformation occurs when believers are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This involves the cleansing and renewal (i.e. a restoration of holiness to a degree and in principle); the ability to love and keep God’s law (i.e. the beginning of a restoration of righteousness) and spiritual enlightenment (i.e. a restoration of the knowledge of God). This restoration is carried forward and advanced in progressive sanctification, as the Holy Spirit applies the word of God to a believer’s heart and life. “We all...are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). We “have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created” (Col. 3:10). The more the Holy Spirit enlightens and convicts us out of the Scriptures, the more our minds, lives and character will become Christ-like. We are to think God’s thoughts after Him and more and more have the mind of Christ (cf. Phil. 2:5; 4:2; Rom. 12:2). Although our transformation in the process of sanctification is far from perfect and, in this life, does not even come close to Christ’s sinless character; nevertheless, this transformation is carried forward without intermission.

The end to which those whom God has chosen are predestined is a complete conformity to the image of His Son. All true believers will be like Jesus in their character and eternal destiny. What began in regeneration and progressed in sanctification is not perfected until our glorification at the second coming. As Paul says, “And so it is written, ‘the first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.... And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Cor. 15:45, 49). In this last act of our salvation (in the *broad* sense of the term), our bodies are resurrected, made spiritual and immortal and reunited with our spirits. Thus, our bodies will be “conformed to the body of His glory” (Phil. 3:12). This final, complete and perfect conforming to the image of

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<sup>89</sup> Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, translated by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Cambridge: James Clark, 1957), 280.

Christ is *not* conforming to His body while He was in a state of humiliation and still liable to suffering and death. It, rather, is a change to His *glorified* human body and soul. Therefore, while it is certainly true that what was lost when Adam fell is fully restored, we must keep in mind that Christ's salvation takes us far beyond what Adam had before the fall. Adam had the ability to commit sin and consequently suffer and die; the glorified saints cannot sin, suffer or die—ever. Thus, on that day, which we shall rejoice for “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2).

### **Some of the Implications of the Image of God in Man**

Earlier, we noted that Genesis, or the book of beginnings, is crucial for understanding the purpose of the universe, the plants and animals as well as mankind. If the universe (as secular humanists or atheistic naturalists assert), evolved by a process of chance, then everything, including mankind, is nothing but a meaningless accident; a combination of brute, unrelated and meaningless facts. People who want to know the meaning of life or man's purpose in the world; who hold to such a worldview can only honestly and logically embrace nihilism. The biblical view, contrary to secular humanism, gives a great significance to mankind because God created man for His own glory (e.g., see Isa. 43:7; cf. Eph. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 10:31), with meaning and purpose. Some of the implications of man as the image and likeness of God are as follows.

First, the fact that man is made in the image of God is the reason that human life has special value. It is the scriptural basis for the sanctity of human life. This point is demonstrated by the institution of capital punishment in Genesis 9, “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man” (vs. 3-5). Then God adds, “Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed” (v. 6).

On the basis of the fact that man is God's image, Jehovah issues a command that demands the death penalty for murder. To kill another human being is to destroy one who is the bearer of the divine image. It is a rejection of man's special status and a direct act of defiance to God who made man. Note that the command to execute murderers does not allow for exceptions based on the age and maturity of the person (e.g., abortion) or the quality of life of the human being (e.g., the killing of the terminally sick, the aged, and the handicapped) or the race or class of the individual (e.g., the practice of the Nazis and communists). Leupold writes, “Man's life is so valuable a thing...since man is made in God's image. He that kills a man destroys God's image.... The crime is so great that such a one actually forfeits his own right to life. There is a just retaliation about having life paid for life. No man can question the justice of the price demanded. Consequently, capital punishment is divinely ordained.”<sup>90</sup> In other places in Scripture, we learn that God's command to execute first and second-degree murderers is

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<sup>90</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 334.

emphatic (the murderer “shall surely be put to death” [e.g., see Num. 35:30-34; cf. Ex. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:17-21; Deut. 19:21]). There are no exceptions; the land will be cursed by God if murderers are allowed to live. (In addition, God only authorizes the state or civil magistrate to carry out capital punishment (e.g., see Rom. 13:1-5).

Those who argue against the death penalty on the basis of the sixth commandment (“thou shalt not kill,” Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17), such as humanists, neo-evangelicals, “Christian” liberals and Roman Catholic bishops and theologians, do not understand that: (1) The sixth commandment forbids *murder* or the taking of *innocent* life. Therefore, it does not apply to the execution of people lawfully convicted of murder. (2) The sixth commandment and the command to execute murderers are *both based* on God's creation of man in His own image. They *both* flow from the sanctity of innocent human life. They are in favor of the same divine principle from two different perspectives. The one says that we must not take innocent life (the sixth commandment), while the other commands us to defend innocent life (the death penalty for murder). (3) Scripture cannot contradict itself. Since God says that we are forbidden to kill the innocent and also requires, in several places, the execution of murderers, then both of these teachings are harmonious and applicable to all mankind.

The importance of the biblical doctrine of man as it relates to the sanctity of life can be seen by the irrationality and wickedness produced by an evolutionary humanistic view of man. The evolutionist views man as merely a sophisticated ape. He is the most evolved of the animals, but is still only an animal. This view has resulted in two different ways of thinking. There are those who reason that since man is only an animal without an immortal soul, then if it is necessary to exterminate people who are deemed antisocial, troublemakers or subhuman, then so be it. The communists and Nazis, who held to an evolutionary faith, had no problem killing millions of people for arbitrary, statist purposes. If man, in principle, is no better than a chicken or a pig, then why not slaughter people at will? In the United States, Canada, Western Europe and other like-minded countries, many people who look at the Holocaust and the mass executions of Stalin with horror have no problem whatsoever with abortion, where innocent babies in the womb are murdered and torn limb from limb simply for convenience sake. One's ultimate view of man has very serious consequences.

The other view, which has grown out of an evolutionary faith, is that if we view the life of man as special and worthy of protection, then all animal life forms must receive the same protection. Radical vegetarians and animal rights groups speak and write about things such as “the chicken holocaust” and the horrifying mass murder of cows, pigs and sheep. Man is nothing more than a hairless ape; and, according to their worldview, it is the worst form of hypocrisy for people to value human life in a special manner and then turn around and kill and eat other animals. The secular humanistic worldview, on the one hand, exalts and worships man. Mankind is viewed as god and the voice of the people is the voice of god. But, on the other hand, man is nothing more than an evolved rat in a world of flux, red in tooth and claw. Men can think highly of themselves but such thoughts have no foundation. In fact according to evolutionary

theory, man's thoughts are nothing more than an epiphenomenon of electrochemical responses. Man is an exalted cockroach, nothing more.

In looking briefly at secular humanistic views of man, we see the importance of the Genesis narrative's sharp boundary between mankind and the animal world. There is no evolutionary gradual transition from animals to man. The animals were made from the ground. The man was formed out of the dust of the earth by the very fingers of Jehovah and God breathed into man the breath of life. Man became a living soul created in the image and likeness of God.

Second, man was given the tools of dominion in his being. Man was specifically designed to rule over the earthly creation. God, through the creation itself, outside of man (his external environment) and within man himself (his nature), set the stage for the cultural or dominion mandate. Man in his *unfallen* state would naturally exercise dominion as God's appointed vice regent in a progressive, God-glorifying manner. What this means is that man is the image of God before the fall with his true knowledge, real righteousness and holiness would have ruled in a complete submission to God's will. Adam was supposed to rule over the creation not only according to his innate rational, scientific, communicative and creative abilities, but he was also to do so with genuine piety and righteousness. Thus we see that: (1) Dominion is a godly responsibility. It is dependent on a holy nature and communion with God and His special revelation. (2) Man's innate urge to dominion after the fall is perverted and can only be set in its proper track through the redemption completed by Jesus Christ. What was natural before the fall is supernaturally bestowed after the fall through the Holy Spirit in sanctification. Unregenerate man still has the innate urge to dominion, for he is still God's image in the broader sense but, because of sin and depravity, his work toward dominion is perverted and sinful. Instead of an innate piety and righteousness that continuously looks to God for laws and guidance, the natural man wants to rule according to his own terms.

Third, man was able to love, enjoy and have fellowship with God. This was man's natural state before the fall. Man is an inherently religious being who can never be what he was meant to be without communion with God. In other words, we only experience our true and full humanity when we are properly related to Jehovah through Jesus Christ. No matter how famous, wealthy, cultured, connected, popular or genteel a person is, if he is not a true Christian, then his image of God or full humanity is blackened, marred and incomplete. Sin, evil and death are unnatural things that have perverted humanity and brought untold harm, suffering and heartache to the human race. Because man's nature is now depraved, enslaved to Satan, separated from God and in a continual rebellion against Him, men seek meaning and purpose only through various expressions of human autonomy; through self-law and various forms of idolatry. Depraved hearts run away from God and seek integration into the void. Thus, man's only hope is to look to Jesus Christ and His perfect work, for only regeneration and genuine faith in the Redeemer can restore men to their original state and purpose.

Fourth, man's creation in the image of God means that man is under authority and is responsible to God in all things. As a bearer of God's image, we belong to Him (see Mk. 12:13-

17) and owe Him everything. The proper response to the creational image is commitment, devotion, love, loyalty, trust and service toward Jehovah. Our creation in the image of God stands as a refutation of all forms of tyranny, despotism and statism because it tells us that God is the source of reality and law, not man. Man is not the crown of evolution who attempts to create meaning and law out of a meaningless chaos. He, rather, is God's image who is responsible to a higher Being. Since he is a created being, he is always responsible to study and obey God's transcendent law. "For evolution there is no God nor any higher law. Every man thus can do what is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). Man is his own lawmaker, either through the state or by his own fiat will, for himself."<sup>91</sup> The idea of man as the source of meaning and law originated with Satan himself (e.g., see Gen. 3:1-5). It results in either anarchy, statism or both. Understanding our creation in God's image is necessary for humility. The evolutionary man who clings to human autonomy holds a position of supreme arrogance. For the one, God is the source of truth, justice and power; while, for the other, power flows from the barrel of the gun. The paternalistic state seeks to mold man in its image. The essence of rebellion against God is to deny our creatureliness and our complete dependence on Him.

Fifth, knowing what the image of God was before the fall, teaches us to pattern ourselves after Jesus, who, in a fallen world, is the only perfect and complete example of what God's image is. He is the only person in all of human history not tainted with original sin; who never committed sin (Heb. 4:15); who always dedicated Himself to God and always obeyed His will (Jn. 4:34; 5:30). He revealed to us what it means to obey God's holy law. We are to emulate His incredibly deep and habitual piety towards God as well as His perfect love and compassion toward men. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). We are to daily set Jesus before us as the mirror of genuine piety, love and sanctification. In every situation of life we should continually be thinking: "What would my precious Savior think, say or do in this encounter?" No wonder Paul, the greatest of apostles, said, "Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Jesus is the ultimate standard, the image of God in its purest sense. There we must look to Him as the model Christian.

Sixth, the fact that Adam was created in the image of God refutes all forms of racial prejudice, for all men from every nation, tribe and tongue have descended from Adam—the first man. The Bible explicitly teaches the unity of the human race (Gen. 1:26; 6:3; 7:1; 10:32; Mt. 19:4; Ac. 17:26; Rom. 5:12ff; 1 Cor. 15:21ff., 45). If divisions are to be made, they are based on faith, belief, or profession, not upon race. This point is brought up because mankind has been plagued with racism throughout its history. The Greeks and Romans considered themselves intrinsically superior to outsiders, who were deemed "barbarians." In India, over time, they developed a caste system in which status was based on one's supposed origin. Among certain deists arose the idea that only Jews and white ethnic groups descended from Adam while the red or dark savage peoples descended from a brute that lived before Adam. Chattel slavery and the exploitation and oppression of Africans and American Indians were justified with such thinking. Modern racism received its justification with Darwinism, which not only denied the unity of the

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<sup>91</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *Genesis*, 15.

human race, but commonly regarded nonwhite peoples as less evolved and thus less intelligent, less cultured and less moral than whites. There were racist writers in the 19th century who argued that blacks were beasts without human souls and, thus, they do not have the rights which humans have.

The creation account not only refutes all such racist thinking, but the ministry of Jesus and the Great Commission do so as well. Even though our Lord's earthly ministry was primarily directed to the Jewish nation, due to Jehovah's covenant obligations to the covenant people; nevertheless, Christ exhibited love and compassion toward non-Jews on a number of occasions. He expressed concern for the Samaritan woman and, with the illustration of living water (Jn. 4), preached the gospel unto her. God's love and salvation is not restricted to the Jewish nation but goes to the whole world (Jn. 3:16). Our Lord answered the request of the Syro-Phoenician woman to cast the demon out of her daughter in a manner that stimulated her faith in the Messiah (Mk. 7:24-30). Jesus healed a paralyzed servant at the request of a Roman centurion and then publicly praised his faith (Mt. 8:5-13). In the Great Commission, the glorified Savior commanded His apostles and evangelists to take the gospel to all nations (Mt. 28:18ff). The church of Christ is a multinational, multiethnic organization. In keeping with this commission, the Holy Spirit instructed Peter to stop regarding the Gentiles as ceremonially unclean; that the time had come to take the Lord's salvation to the non-Jewish world (cf. Ac. 10:9-33). Peter understood what God had just taught him saying, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Ac. 10:34-35).

Paul fought against racism in the church and stressed the unity of the human race by appealing to our unity in Adam: "And he has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Ac. 17:26). Because everyone originated in one person—Adam—Jews ought not to despise Gentiles, and Greeks ought not to hate Jews. "The Athenians prided themselves on being...sprung from the soil of their native Attica...[and] considered themselves superior to non-Greeks.... Against such claims to racial superiority Paul asserts the unity of mankind, a unity derived *ex enos*, i.e., from Adam."<sup>92</sup> The apostle fervently attacked racism in the church by teaching that Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14); that when it comes to salvation in Jesus and membership in His body, there is no longer Jew or Gentile (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28). The issue when it comes to salvation and spiritual fellowship has never been race but always faith. Those who have the faith of Abraham are "the sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:6; Rom. 4:9-13). When Peter and other Jews withdrew from the Gentiles when certain Judaizers came, Paul strongly and publicly rebuked him to his face (Gal. 2:11). Let us not forget that whatever color we are on the outside, or whatever language we speak, we are all of one blood; we are all children of Adam. Racism is unbiblical, irrational, unscientific and wicked.

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<sup>92</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951 [1990]), 382.

## Heretical Concepts of the Image of God in Man

The doctrine of man as created in God's image, when misunderstood or perverted, can have a profoundly negative impact on other key biblical teachings. For this reason, we will briefly examine and analyze some of the most common errors regarding this doctrine.

The first great error regarding the image of God in man that merits special attention is the "supernaturalistic" view of Roman Catholicism. This view came into being during the Middle Ages primarily due to the influence of neo-platonic philosophy on the church. According to papal scholars, Adam was first created with certain natural gifts (spirituality, freedom, virtues, etc.). He was sinless and possessed a certain natural righteousness, but what he possessed was only good enough for an earthly destiny. Within the natural aspect of the image remained "a natural tendency of the lower appetites and passions to rebel against the authority of the higher powers of reason and conscience. This tendency, called concupiscence, is not itself sin, but becomes sin when it is consented to by the will and passes into voluntary action."<sup>93</sup> Because of Adam's natural state or tendency (concupiscence), he was not able to earn by a full merit the blessedness of heaven. His natural state or the natural aspect of the image in him was holding him back. The good that Adam had to perform to merit heaven must be of a supernatural character. What Adam needed to counteract the negative aspect of his natural state was a *donum superadditum*—a divine gift of supernatural likeness to God. This likeness consisted of the moral qualities of God that would enable Adam to gain the special full merit needed to attain the state of glory. Some Roman Catholic theologians taught that this gift came immediately at the time of Adam's creation while some believed it came after, as a reward for the proper use of his natural powers. This idea that man, even before the fall, was essentially incomplete and needed an added divine gift has had a negative impact on Roman Catholic theology in a number of ways.

(1) It enabled the church to adhere to *semi-Pelagianism*, for while they believed the *donum superadditum* or special added gift of special righteousness was lost in the fall, they regarded the essential nature of man as intact. In other words, man was fallen but his use of "natural" reason, morality and the other gifts were *fully operative*. The Reformers rejected this view as having no basis in Scripture whatsoever. They believed that since Adam's original righteousness was lost in the fall, the corruption of sin affected every aspect of man's nature. While men could still use reason and still had sharp empirical abilities, apart from special grace, he could only do these things as a covenant breaker.

(2) This defective view of the fall, where man's reason is essentially immune from the consequences of Adam's sin, leaves believers and unbelievers on the same level when it comes to most areas of science and truth. According to Roman Catholic theology, all men, whether saved or not, possess an equal ability to recognize truth, evaluate evidence, make sound logical deductions and come to a correct knowledge through objective analysis. "This leaves open the possibility of a rational or natural theology—even without special revelation [and even without regeneration] all persons are able to gain some true knowledge of God. It also leaves open the

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<sup>93</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 208.

possibility of a natural ethic. Being free, man is capable of doing some [truly] good works apart from grace. On a seemingly innocent distinction that while the likeness of God [i.e. the super added gift of righteousness] was lost, the image was not, leaving open the possibility of a natural theology and the natural ethic, upon which the whole system of [Roman] Catholic theology was built.”<sup>94</sup> The Romanist view not only complemented their thoroughly syncretistic *semi-Pelagianism* soteriology but also justified their incorporation of neo-platonic and Aristotelian philosophy into their theology and ethics.

The second great heresy regarding the image of God is a naturalistic view which holds that man was not created holy and righteous but rather innocent and neutral. What was significant about man was his free will and his formal freedom of moral choice. This is essentially the view of Pelagians, Arminians, Socinians, rationalists and certain evolutionists. “The image of God, Pelagius taught, consists only in a natural God-given possibility of perfection, which cannot be lost and is therefore still a part of every human being. God bestows the ability (*posse*), but the will (*velle*) is up to us.”<sup>95</sup> Adam was created in a childlike state, not with righteousness, holiness and knowledge. He was given the ability to make something of himself but was essentially like a blank piece of paper or canvas. It was up to Adam to paint the picture and determine his own character and destiny. Coupled with this teaching is the idea (held by Pelagians, Rationalists and Socinians) that man was created mortal. Death, in their view, was not a result of Adam's fall but was perfectly natural.

The naturalistic view was championed by Enlightenment writers and has come to dominate secular humanistic cultures, secular psychology and public or state education system. Perhaps its foremost popularizer, as it relates to the modern era, was John Locke. According to Locke, the mind began life as a blank slate; it is like a white piece of paper with no markings on it. Man is not in his original state innately holy but must become holy through self-effort and struggle. If Adam had been created inherently good, proponents of this school of thought argue, he would have not been truly free. It is not surprising that those who hold this view do not view man as inherently evil after the fall. All are born in a neutral state – neither good nor evil. This school of thought leads to ideas of self-salvation. As an essentially neutral being, man does not need to be rescued, but must save himself by being more diligent and executing more effort. The Pelagian views salvation as a work of man; the Arminian as a cooperative work and the secular humanist looks to education, a change of environment and “scientific progress.”

## **Man as Male and Female**

In verse 27 a new element is introduced in the execution of God’s creative purpose—the distinction of the human sexes: “So God created man in His own image; and the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” This verse in three brief sentences reveals to us the fulfillment of Jehovah’s creative work (v. 26). It specifies the most significant aspects of

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<sup>94</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 500-501.

<sup>95</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:534.

what it means to be human (verse 26 gives us the direct voice of God; verse 27 the comments of the inspired narrator.) This verse is beautiful and poetic. “The three clauses are in opposition. The first two are arranged chiastically and emphasize the divine image in man, while the third specifies that women also bear the divine image....”<sup>96</sup> Earlier (in verse 22) we learn that after God made the animals, He blessed them and told them to multiply. This implies that two sexes were made among all the animals but it does not state it directly. The fact that Moses specifically points out the distinction of the sexes with regard to mankind is significant. He is telling us a number of things about man.

First, the passage strongly implies male headship. The human race, composed of both men and women, is called “man” (*adam*). Jehovah does not name the human race “woman” or use a neutral term like “persons.” “He called us ‘man,’ which anticipates the male headship brought out clearly in chapter 2.... Male headship may be personally repugnant to feminists, but it does have the virtue of explaining the sacred text.”<sup>97</sup> The idea, common in our day, that using the word “man” to describe the human race is sexist or unfair to women is thoroughly unscriptural and sinful. Anyone who regards this divinely inspired linguistic practice to be unfair, unjust, insensitive, antiquated or merely a reflection of a sexist patriarchal society, not only implicitly rejects the inspiration and authority of Scripture, but also impugns the wisdom, goodness and justice of Jehovah who deliberately picked the word “man.” When modernists and neo-evangelicals deliberately pervert the word of God by adopting gender-neutral terminology in their translations of Scripture and their church liturgies in public worship, they are implicitly saying that they are wiser and more just than God Himself. Anyone who deliberately changes the clear meaning of the divine text to accommodate our secular humanistic culture commits a grievous sin against Jehovah.

Second, verse 27 teaches that not just man but women are also fully the image of God. This is the only place in Genesis 1 that refers to sexuality. Jehovah is assigning a certain dignity to the different human genders and wants to make it perfectly clear that both men and women “display the glory of God’s image with equal brilliance.... This is consistent with God’s intention, stated in verse 26, that both sexes should rule: ‘... and let them rule....’”<sup>98</sup> The expressions “male” (*zakhar*) and “female” (*neqebhah*, from *naqab*, meaning to perforate)<sup>99</sup> are not the common words in Hebrew for man and woman. These words were chosen to highlight the distinction between the sexes in humanity. Thus, God tells us plainly that although men and women are different in many ways, they are equally God’s likeness and are equals in being and dignity before God. Jehovah will assign to men and women different roles and He will illustrate this difference in both the order (man first, woman second) and manner of creation (the woman

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<sup>96</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33.

<sup>97</sup> Raymond C. Orlund, Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3,” in editors, John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 98.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

<sup>99</sup> Based on the root word for female, a number of ancient Jewish writers came up with the absurd interpretation that Adam and Eve were created as a single bisexual, hermaphrodite being with their two bodies joined back-to-back. God then cleaved the two bodies apart. Genesis chapter 2 refutes such nonsense.

was taken out of man's side). Nevertheless, both are equal in God's sight and women are not inferior to men ontologically as to their intrinsic being. "God made Adam the king, whose dominion was the earth, and Eve a queen, with both king and queen fully manifesting and displaying the image of God."<sup>100</sup> The idea that the Bible or Christianity is sexist or favors the oppression of women is false and reveals a deep ignorance of Scripture.

In connection with this point, the image of God as male and female (contrary to a number of scholars) does not refer to man and woman considered collectively. A number of feminist authors do not accept the idea that Adam as an individual being or Eve as a person by herself is fully God's image. They want to see Adam and Eve as a couple in union as a reflection of the triune God. As the two are one flesh, the three persons of the Godhead are one God. Besides the fact that such an interpretation is pure speculation and has no textual support, there are passages that explicitly contradict such a view. In Genesis 5:1 and 3 we read, "In the day God created man [Adam], He made him [singular] in the likeness of God.... And Adam lived 130 years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." Adam (an individual), who was created in God's image, passed the divine image (although corrupted by original sin) by ordinary generation onto his son Seth. In addition, the death penalty for the murder of one person, whether male or female, is based on the fact that each individual is made in God's image (see Gen. 9:5-6).

Third, the passage also implies a completely unique relationship (monogamous heterosexual marriage) which is elaborated upon in the next chapter. Men and women can only multiply, fill the earth and have dominion over it through holy marriage. This point is made clear in the fuller complementary narrative in 2:18-25:

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The narrative of the creation of woman is intended to give us important additional information about the creation of the woman on the sixth day. It tells us the reason why she was made; how she came into being; and her created purpose. Prior to this point everything in the new creation that has been scrutinized by God has received a positive assessment. Jehovah has declared His

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<sup>100</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Truths We Confess: A Layman's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1:133.

work good or very good. But here we have an announcement of God to Himself that something is “not good.” The expression “not good” here does *not* mean that something that God has made is defective or evil. It is a “not good” of incompleteness. Man as man before the fall was God’s own image with righteousness, true knowledge and holiness, but Adam was not created to be a solitary or unsocial being. Man needed a companion to complete him, to remove his aloneness, to help him in the task of godly dominion. Jehovah speaks to Himself and gives a solution to this weakness. “The last part of v. 18 reads literally, ‘I will make for him a helper as in front of him (or according to what is in front of him).’ This last phrase, ‘as in front of him (or according to what is in front of him)’ (*kenegdo*) occurs only here and in v. 20. It suggests that what God creates for Adam will correspond to him. Thus the new creation will be neither a superior nor an inferior, but an equal.”<sup>101</sup> The woman or wife will be Adam’s perfect counterpart in every way. She will agree with and complement him physically, mentally and spiritually. She will enable him to fulfill his God-ordained objectives and life in every possible manner. “She is not an inferior being.”<sup>102</sup>

What is particularly interesting in this account is the fact that God prepared Adam for the creation of the woman by teaching him his need of a corresponding companion or wife. Jehovah brought the birds and animals to Adam to see what he would name each species. Adam could see male and female birds of very kind. He observed that every species of animals had both males and females. He understood that none of the lower creation was created in God’s image or corresponded to him. In this task of dominion Adam, became fully conscious of his aloneness or incompleteness. (Naming the birds and animals was a scientific endeavor. In the Hebrew mindset the naming of something involves first the discovery of its particular nature. As Adam did this it became crystal clear to him that no creature in the animal world shared his nature.)

Now that Adam understood his situation, God put him into a deep sleep in order to perform history’s first surgical procedure. (Since Adam had committed no sin and thus had no guilt, Jehovah would not let him endure any pain. Perhaps there also is an element of surprise involved. God wanted to present Eve to Adam fully formed and perfect as a gift.) God removed a portion of Adam’s “side” (Heb. *sēlā*). The word *sēlā* that usually translated rib means “side.”<sup>103</sup> If a rib was involved, which is likely, a good chunk of flesh came along with it, for Adam’s celebrative poem includes “bone” and “flesh” (v. 23). God took the bone and flesh from Adam and used it to “make”—or literally “build” the woman. “‘Build’ applies to the fashioning of the structure of some importance; it involves constructive effort. Both of these factors are in

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<sup>101</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, 179.

<sup>102</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 130.

<sup>103</sup> Victor P. Hamilton writes, “Almost without exception this word has been translated as ‘rib’ (hence even today the many puns on ‘Adam’s rib’ and ‘women’s lib’). A better translation of *sēlā* is side. The word designates the side or the shell of the ark of the covenant (Exod. 25:12, 14; 37:3, 5), the side of a building (Exod. 26:20; 36:25) or even a whole room (‘side chamber, arcade, cell,’ Ezek. 41:5-8), or a ridge or terrace on the hill (2 Sam. 16:13). Gen. 2:21 is the only place in the OT where modern versions render this word as ‘rib’” (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1 to 17*, 178). The only possible justification for the translation “rib” is a similar word based on an Arabic root meaning “to curve or deviate.” Since ribs curve it is argued that *sēlā* refers to a curved bar. Since the word is never used in this manner anywhere else in Scripture this is a weak argument.

evidence in the case of the creation of the woman.”<sup>104</sup> “The verb *built* [*bāna*] by its very definition implies beauty, stability, and durability.”<sup>105</sup> In the creation of man, God takes the soil and like a potter fashions Adam. In the case of the woman, God uses flesh and bone to construct or build Eve. Matthew Henry’s words on this creative act are beautiful: “Yet man being made last of the creatures, as the best and most excellent of all, Eve’s being made after Adam, and out of him, puts and honour upon that sex, as the glory of the man, 1 Cor. xi. 7. If man is the head, she is the crown, a crown of the visible creation. The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double-refined, one removed further from the earth.”<sup>106</sup>

After building the woman, God brings her to the man. Since Jehovah made Eve and she had no earthly father, He takes the role of father in giving Eve to Adam as his bride. This is a presentation for marriage. So there stands Eve before Adam, naked, perfect, incredibly beautiful and gorgeous; and, uniquely suited to be Adam’s companion and helpmeet. Adam looks at her and is so full of joy, happiness and contentment act what he sees, in ecstasy bursts into poetry: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23). This is the first time in Scripture that the words of man are recorded in direct speech. “In these five short lines many of the standard techniques of Hebrew poetry are employed: parallelism (lines 2-3; 4-5), assonance [i.e. resemblance in sound in words or syllables] and word play (woman [*ish-shah*]/man [*ish*]); chiasmus (A B C/C’B’A’)...; and verbal repetition.”<sup>107</sup> This short poem is exceptionally rich in meaning and contains a number of noteworthy concepts.

First, the expression “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” indicates the following: a) There is an equal footing regarding their humanity (Adam and Eve are made of the same stuff, they are set apart from the animals); b) Adam and Eve are one flesh (see discussion below) both literally and due to their marriage relationship. While Americans speak of blood relatives, Hebrews spoke of their relatives as “flesh and bone.” This is a “poetic formulation of the traditional kinship formula. For example, Laban said to his nephew Jacob, ‘You are my bone and my flesh’ (29:14; cf. Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13-14 [12-13]).”<sup>108</sup> c) The expression “we are your bone and flesh” was used as a statement of support and loyalty by some representatives of the northern tribes to David at Hebron (2 Sam. 5:1). They stated their kinship as a platform or basis for covenantal loyalty to their leader. It may be that Adam, in this part of the poem, was not only stating an obvious reality but was also making a covenantal commitment to her in the presence of God. This, then, served as a biblical counterpart to modern marriage vow.<sup>109</sup>

Second, Adam’s work of naming, that had revealed to him his need and social incompleteness is triumphantly concluded with the naming of his wife. Although men and women are both created in God’s image and equal in nature, once again the text reveals a

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<sup>104</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 135.

<sup>105</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: 1-17*, 179.

<sup>106</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:21.

<sup>107</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 70.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> See Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 180.

subordination of the woman (wife) to her man (husband). The naming of the woman indicates Adam's headship and authority. Some have tried to derive a significant meaning of the two words used (*ish*–man; *ish-shah*–woman) from a parallel Arabic root *ish* having the basic idea of “one who exercises power,” and *ishshah* meaning “one who is soft.”<sup>110</sup> This meaning, however, is doubtful. Perhaps by using two words which sound alike, Adam wanted to emphasize the similarity in identity of the first marriage partners.

In verses 24 and 25 we have some explanatory comments by the inspired author about the character and responsibilities of marriage. These verses set forth the basic creation ordinance of marriage. The man is to leave (Heb. “forsakes”) his father and his mother. That is, he is to move out and establish his own separate household. The woman goes out of her home as well, but the man is mentioned because, as the new covenant head, he is responsible for the maintenance of the new covenant relationship. (The word “forsake” is obviously used in a relative sense, in that firstborn sons were responsible for the care of aged parents, especially widowed mothers, e.g., see Jn. 19:26-27). With marriage, man’s priorities change. Before marriage his chief earthly duties and obligations are directed to his father and mother. After his marriage he must still honor or reverence his parents, but now his chief obligations are to his new wife. “In modern Western societies where filial duties are often ignored, this may seem like a minor point to make, but in traditional families like Israel where honoring parents is the highest human obligation next to honoring God, this remark about forsaking them is very striking.”<sup>111</sup> The Bible endorses the nuclear family. The “union of the two in marriage is to be exclusive.”<sup>112</sup>

Man is not only to leave but he also is to cleave. The man is to be united to his wife covenantally, emotionally and physically. He is to stick to her with love, commitment, loyalty and fellowship, “taking care of her, nourishing and cherishing her, providing all things comfortable for her, continuing to live with her, and not depart from her as long as they live.”<sup>113</sup> The husband and wife are, as it were, glued together into one, for better or worse, until death. Unlike modern secular thought which views marriage as a mere human social convention or ad hoc arrangement, the Bible regards marriage as: ordained directly by God; a covenant arrangement; and permanently binding (i.e. It is only to be severed by physical death or covenantal death [e.g., by sexual unfaithfulness whether adultery or fornication]).

The cleaving is expressed and amplified by the next clause, “and they shall become one flesh.” Although Paul applies this statement explicitly to sexual intercourse in 1 Corinthians 6:16; in this context, it likely applies more broadly to include unity of purpose and even the new blood relation. The marriage of a man and woman brings the two into a union so close, there are is one person or entity. Practically and socially they are one soul in one body. “‘Becoming one flesh’ involves the complete identification of one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits, a union consummated in intercourse.”<sup>114</sup> The man is no longer to regard

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<sup>110</sup> See H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 136-137.

<sup>111</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 71.

<sup>112</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, 66.

<sup>113</sup> John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament*, 1:21.

<sup>114</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 137.

himself by himself and the woman, likewise, by herself is not one flesh. This union is so intimate and strong that Paul applies this verse to the mystical union between Christ and His church (e.g., see Eph. 5:31). Marriage also creates a new kinship relation between a man and his wife that even survives divorce or death. “The law in Lev. 18 and 20 and possibly Deut. 24:01-4, illustrate the application of this kinship-of-spouses principle to the situation following divorce or death of one of the parties. Since a woman becomes on marriage a sister to her husband’s brothers, a daughter to her father-in-law, and so on she cannot normally marry any of them should her first husband die or divorce her.”<sup>115</sup>

Verse 25 serves as the climax and conclusion to the creation and marriage of Adam and Eve: “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” This statement tells us that before the fall Adam and Eve lived in a state of sinless perfection and thus had no reason to feel any sense of shame or guilt. They had nothing to hide from God or each other; for, without sin, they lived in perfect harmony and fellowship with their Creator. This statement closes this glorious scene and sets up the reaction of guilt and shame in chapter 3 after Adam’s fall (vs. 3-11). Throughout the Old Testament (after this narrative) nakedness is often connected to various forms of humiliation. Nakedness is associated with the poor and downtrodden (Gen. 3:7, 10, 11; Ezek. 16:22, 37, 39; Hos. 2:3; Amos 2:16; Mic. 1:8). It is used to humiliate and bring shame to prisoners of war and slaves (Isa. 20:4; 47:3; Mic. 1:11; Nah. 3:5). And it frequently is a sign of shame or guilt (Gen. 3:7, 10, 11; Ezek. 16:22, 37, 39; Hos. 2:3; Amos 2:16; Mic. 1:8, 11). What a good and glorious creation! “There was nothing in them, on them or about them that caused shame; nothing sinful, defective, scandalous or blameworthy; no sin in their nature, no guilt on their consciences, or wickedness in their hands or actions [or minds].”<sup>116</sup>

## New Testament Applications

The Genesis record of the creation of Adam and Eve is used as a proof text by Jesus Christ and Paul for a number of important doctrines regarding marriage. The reason for this use is rooted in the fact that: (1) The New Testament authors believed in the inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy and full binding authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. (2) The Genesis account of the creation and marriage of the first man and woman is treated as a creation ordinance by the inspired writers of the Old and New Testament (e.g., God speaking through Malachi appeals to Genesis 2:24 [see Malachi 2:15] to strongly condemn the men of Israel for divorcing their older faithful wives in order to marry younger women. Jehovah has a holy hatred of unlawful unjustified divorce). Therefore, all we need to do to make useful applications of our text is to examine how this teaching is applied in the New Testament. There are a number of crucial teachings.

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<sup>115</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 71.

<sup>116</sup> John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament*, 21.

## Jesus' Teaching on Divorce and Remarriage

In the days of our Lord most of the Jewish people had a very permissive doctrine of divorce. Among the rabbis (Hillel and his followers) arose a liberal understanding of the Old Testament law regulating divorce. The law says, "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house..." (Deut. 24:1). The words "some uncleanness" (Heb. *erwath dābhār*) were interpreted by most Jews as meaning "anything undesirable" and thus the common practice in Israel was divorce for any cause whatsoever. Jesus refutes the common Jewish understanding (i.e. divorce for any reason [e.g., one's wife is a bad cook, or too old, or overweight, or not good-looking, etc.]) in Matthew 5:32 and 19:4-9 by appealing directly to Genesis 2:24. After quoting the creation narrative our Lord says, "Therefore what God has joined together let not man separate" (Mt. 19:5). Christ says that God instituted marriage and thus it is defined and regulated by Him. Jehovah brought Eve to Adam and established marriage as a divine institution. Therefore, we do not set the rules for divorce and remarriage; God does. There are a number of profound implications of Christ's application of Genesis 2:24.

First, if God has established marriage, then our culture and society must stop treating the institution of marriage as an arbitrary invention of mankind. In other words, the rules regarding marriage are absolute, unchanging and always binding because they come directly from God. The secular humanistic concept of marriage as a social invention of patriarchal societies to oppress women and keep them under control is clearly false. (The fact that certain cultures have grossly abused and perverted the biblical concept of covenant headship is due to sin and heresy, not the original institution of marriage is ordained by God. This topic will be considered in a moment.) Moreover, the popular concept in America today that marriage is primarily engaged in for romantic or emotional reasons is also fallacious. Such false, unbiblical understandings of marriage as an institution have two serious, negative effects on marriage and culture. (1) If marriage is not a divine institution but is something determined solely due to arbitrary and changing human opinion, then there is nothing solid and substantial outside of man to hold marriages together. If one gets married to fulfill one's fantasies regarding romance, emotional excitement, sexual pleasure and so on, then once the romance, emotional excitement or sexual attraction subsides, the marriage has no reason to continue and divorce logically follows. It is for this reason that the great decline in Bible believing Christianity in America and the influence of the biblical worldview has led to exceptionally high rates of fornication, adultery and divorce. People get rid of spouses today as they would trade in an old car. Moreover, if people believe that marriage is an arbitrary human invention, they do not have any solid or valid reasons as to why they should not avoid marriage altogether or at least greatly delay it to live a life of fornication and debauchery. The more secular our nation has become, the more people have decided to live together in fornication. Marriage is put off for many years and is only engaged in for romantic or sociological reasons. America has become an adulterous, sexually immoral

nation where virgins are made the subject matter for jokes, mockery and condemnation in the media and Hollywood. For modern evolutionary humanism, the institution of marriage has only a future of flux and change. Consequently, humanists cannot really even define marriage. Since marriage cannot even be defined in any fixed solid manner, one should only expect a future of disintegration and obsolescence. Our country must return to the teaching of Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:18-25.

(2) Without the creation ordinance of marriage as a divine institution, marriage can mean virtually anything in a secular humanistic society. In almost every Western nation today homosexual and lesbian marriages are recognized and sanctioned by the civil government. If autonomous man determines meaning and ethics arbitrarily through majority vote, or a so-called council of experts, or by the majority of a supreme court determining *positive* law, such perverted concepts of marriage makes sense logically. With no absolute ethics above and beyond man, marriage can be anything autonomous man wants it to be. Based on their own worldview there can be a return to polygamy, or group marriage (e.g., two men and two women), or even interspecies marriage (e.g., a man and a goat). The secular humanist may object to such conclusions as obviously grotesque, but they have no ethical platform to make such objections. Moreover, they approve of homosexual marriage, which in God's sight is a disgusting abomination on a level ethically with bestiality (e.g., Lev. 18:22; 20:13, 15; Rom. 1:26-27, 32; 1 Cor. 6:9; etc.).

Second, God instituted marriage to be between *one man* and *one woman* ("the *two* have become *one* flesh"). The plain implication of this creation reality is that anything other than this is a perversion of God's created order. All deviations from one man and one woman *for life* are a result of sin and the fall. Thus, the original institution of marriage condemns things such as homosexuality and unlawful divorce (i.e. divorce for things other than fornication or adultery). These behaviors are exceptionally sinful and are condemned by God in a number of other passages (e.g., Gen. 19; Lev. 18; 20:10ff; Deut. 23:17-18; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Jesus is telling the Pharisees that God did not institute marriage so they could get a new wife every so often; when they were bored or lusted after a younger, more beautiful woman. One should no more get rid of his wife than cut off a healthy limb. They are one flesh, not two. In addition, it implicitly condemns polygamy, which was not a scandalous sin for God regulated it in His law (Deut. 21:15-17); and, many godly men in the Old Testament period practiced it without Jehovah speaking one word against their behavior (e.g., Abraham, Jacob, possibly Moses [the Ethiopian woman, Num. 9:1; 10:11; 12:1; and Zipporah, Ex. 18:2-5], Caleb [1 Chronicles 2:42-49, Josh. 15:13-19], Gideon [Jdg. 8:29-32], Jair [a judge over Israel, Jdg. 10:3-5], Ibzan [another judge, Jdg. 12:8-10], Abdon [a judge, Jdg. 12:13-15], Elkanah [1 Sam. 1:1-28; 2:20-21], David [2 Sam. 12:1-12], Solomon [he, however, had extended periods of declension and was snared into idolatry through the multiplication of wives; see 1 Kgs. 11:1-8], Joash [2 Chron. 24:1-3; he was only a good king while Jehoiada the priest was alive. Interestingly, it seems that Jehoiada picked his two wives; see 2 Chron. 24:3]). Although God tolerated polygamy and regulated it so each wife would be treated fairly and justly, it obviously is not the ideal and should be avoided by

Christians in countries where it is illegal. Note also that it is explicitly forbidden to church governors (elders, or presbyters) and pastors in the new covenant era (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6); thus indicating a tightening of rules or the Old Testament era. Note, however, that Deuteronomy 17:17 does forbid a ruler of Israel to multiply wives (given God's approbation of David this may not be a complete ban but a law designed to avoid a very rich man collecting wives a Solomon did to his own ruin).

Third, marriage was designed by God to be permanent. "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mt. 19:6). Since Jehovah is the one who joins a man and a woman together in marriage, man has no right or authority to sever marriage unions unless God Himself says that it is lawful to dissolve the marriage bond in His word. This was a stinging rebuke to the common practice of the Jews at the time. In first century Palestine marriage was so insecure for women, due to the immorality of the man and the lax divorce laws, that many girls were afraid to get married. Church leaders and civil magistrates have a moral obligation to uphold the very strict divorce laws found in God's word. So-called "no-fault divorce" statutes are a sign of societal apostasy in this country and are destructive of any healthy social order.

Jesus made it clear that the divine law which allowed for divorce in the case of fornication<sup>117</sup> was necessitated by sin. Our Lord sided with the school of the *Shammai* which interpreted '*erwath dābhār* as sexual immorality or adultery. This interpretation makes perfect sense in that this phrase literally means "nakedness of the thing" or "a naked matter." It is used elsewhere of the shameful exposure of the body (Gen. 9:22; Ex. 20:26; Lam. 1:8; Ezek. 16:36, 37) and perverted sexual behaviors (Lev. 18). In fact, the term nakedness is used as a metaphor for sexual intercourse 23 times in Leviticus 18. Sexual immorality or adultery in the marriage relationship was a death penalty offense (Lev. 20:10-11; cf. Ex. 20:14). The innocent party could (with proper witnesses) have the adulterer executed or if there were not sufficient witnesses for a civil trial or they wanted to extend mercy, they could divorce their spouse (e.g., Mt. 1:18) and demand monetary recompense (cf. Prov. 6:35). Christ is saying that Deuteronomy 24:1 teaches that a man who knows that his wife is committing adultery, but who does not have sufficient

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<sup>117</sup> The word *porneia* occurs 26 times in the New Testament and is always translated as *fornication* in the KJV. Many modern translations have adopted the translation "sexual immorality" because the word has many shades of meaning all related to unlawful sexual behavior of some kind. Therefore, the context should be used to determine if the word is being used in a specific manner. A number of times a word is used to refer to sexual sins that do not necessarily include adultery (e.g., prostitution, Rev. 2:14, 20; sexual relations between unmarried people, Mt. 15:19; Mk. 7:1; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19; sexual immorality in general, Jn. 8:41; Ac. 15:20, 29; 21:25; Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:13, 18; 2 Cor. 6:17; 12:21; Eph. 5:3). Sometimes the word is used interchangeably with adultery. This is the case in Mt. 5:32; 19:9 and Rev. 2:20-22. Moreover, *porneia* "is derived from *porne*, a prostitute, without specifying whether she (or her client) is married or unmarried. Further, it is used in the Septuagint for the unfaithfulness of Israel, Yahweh's bride, as exemplified in Hosea's wife Gomer" (John R. W. Stott, *Christian Counterculture* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978], 97). "[I]n Ezekiel xvi, 25-28, the wife of Jehovah is said to commit *both* sins" (Arthur W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982], 93). Since *porneia* is a comprehensive word that covers all kinds of sexual immorality, including adultery, and since the context of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is marriage, it makes perfect sense to regard it in these contexts as "adultery" or "marital unfaithfulness." Some scholars have speculated that the word *porneia* is used instead of adultery (*moicheia*) because the marriage covenant can be broken by a whole variety of perverse sexual practices (e.g., homosexuality, bestiality, incest, etc.).

evidence for a conviction in court, or who does not want to go through a trial, is free to divorce his unfaithful wife. God's original plan for marriage was a *permanent* union between one man and one woman. But adultery is such a serious offense that God gives the innocent party the freedom to impose death on the guilty party literally (the death penalty) or covenantally (through divorce).

### **Paul's Teaching on Covenant Headship**

The apostle Paul also appeals to the original creation of Adam and Eve for proof of certain doctrines. In particular, the covenant headship of the man and how it relates to the woman's role in the marriage relationship and the place of women in the church. For example, in a discussion about the necessity of women wearing head coverings (i.e. a cloth veil over one's hair) in public worship (1 Cor. 11:2-16), Paul appeals to Genesis 2 to support his contention that "the head of a woman is man" (v. 3). The apostle notes that: (1) "man is not from woman, but woman from man" (v. 8). In other words, man was created first and the woman second. There was a certain deliberate order in the creation of Adam and Eve. The woman was formed out of the man, not vice versa. She received her origin from him. (2) The woman was created for the man, on his account, and not he on hers. For Paul this is indisputable proof that "the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23); that wives are to be subject "to their own husbands in everything" (Eph. 5:24). Although the woman was created in God's image and was fully Adam's spiritual equal, she was made after Adam out of his own side—to be a helper suitable to his needs as the leader. "God did not create man and woman in an undifferentiated way, and their maleness and femaleness identify the respective roles. A man, just by virtue of his manhood, is called to lead for God. Woman, just by virtue of her womanhood, is called to help for God."<sup>118</sup>

This teaching has often been misunderstood. It does not mean that women are inferior or were created to be man's slave. It rather teaches us that Jehovah wants the woman (the wife), who is man's equal, to live in submission to him in order to carry out the dominion mandate and glorify God. In marriage, the man heads the home for the Lord and his wife helps him to fulfill this divine calling. Her divine calling is to help him be the best he can be as defined by God's word. The man is not an autonomous dictator, but rather a loving leader who rules in submission to Christ and his law-word. Feminists object strongly to this teaching and argue that it is unfair and irrational. In response to such objections, it needs to be pointed out that if we accept the feminist myth that subordination means inferiority and slavery, then we must also jettison the biblical doctrine of the trinity. According to Scripture and orthodox Christian teaching, each person of the Godhead (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) is co-eternal, consubstantial and completely equal in glory, power, honor and dignity. Each person is fully God in every possible way. But in the economy of redemption (i.e. how God works in this world to save the elect), the

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<sup>118</sup> Raymond C. Ortland, Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship" in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 102.

Son is subordinate to the Father and the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son (e.g., see 1 Cor. 11:3; Mt. 26:39; Mk. 14:6; Heb. 10:7; etc.).

The Genesis narrative is also used by Paul as the reason that women are not to engage in public speaking or teaching in public worship. They are not to have a church recognized or sanctioned teaching authority over men. In 1 Corinthians 14:33b he writes, “As in all the churches, let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be in submission, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” (The vast majority of commentators connect 33b to 34, not to what precedes.)<sup>119</sup> In all the apostolic churches women were not permitted to have positions of authority over men; they must maintain a position of submission in the assemblies. If they have a question they must go to their covenantal head (their husbands). The scriptural ground for this prohibition is “the law also says.” In other words, this universal Christian practice is not based only on the inspired apostle’s instructions but also is rooted in God’s law. The expression “law” in such a context can refer to the whole Old Testament, the five books of Moses or a specific commandment. Since there are no explicit prohibitions of women speaking in congregational worship in the law or the prophets, it is likely that Paul is either appealing to the fact that: (1) the law put all the elements of tabernacle worship solely in the hands of men; and/or (2) God created women to be in a role of submission in Genesis 2:21-25.

That the latter is in mind is likely, given Paul’s use of the creation story to address the role of women in the church in 1 Timothy 2:11-14: “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” The apostle introduces his reference to the creation narrative with the conjunction “for” (*gar*). This means that women are forbidden to teach (the pastoral office) or have authority (the office of overseer or elder) over men *because* the woman was not created first, Adam was; and, secondarily, the woman was the one deceived by Satan. There is a direct cause-and-effect relationship between Paul’s inspired understanding of the

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<sup>119</sup> Charles Hodge ably notes the reasons as to why “as in all the churches” should be connected to verse 34 and is not a conclusion to 33a: “1. That verse 33 has an appropriate conclusion in the words ‘God is not a God of confusion but of peace.’ 2. The words *as in all the churches of the saints*, if connected with verse 33, do not give a pertinent sense. The apostle would be made to prove a conceded and undeniable truth by an appeal to the authority or experience of the church. 3. If connected with v. 34, this passage is parallel to 11, 16, where the custom of the churches in reference to the deportment of women in public is appealed to as authoritative. The sense is thus pertinent and good. ‘As is the case in all other Christian churches, let your women keep silence in the public assemblies.’ The fact that in no Christian church was public speaking permitted to women was itself a strong proof that it was unchristian, i.e. contrary to the spirit of Christianity. Paul, however, adds to prohibition the weight of apostolic authority and not of that only but also the authority of reason and of Scripture” (*I & II Corinthians* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, (1857, 59) 1974], 304). In addition, one should keep in mind that the Greek manuscripts have no punctuation, and do not even separate words by a space. Therefore, the connecting of 33b with the preceding statement about God not being a God of confusion, but of peace (33a) was made by translators (e.g., see the KJV and NASB). They made an interpretive decision to make 33b the final modifier of 33a even though such a decision does not make any sense. An undeniable truth (i.e. that God is the God of peace) is not strengthened or proved by an appeal to the experiences or authoritative decisions of local churches.

creation account and the authoritative apostolic instructions regarding the role of women in the church. Consequently, the suggestion of modernists and neo-evangelicals that the New Testament teaching on this topic is culturally conditioned, sexist and thus limited to the time before society understood women's full equality with men (both ontologically and economically) is heretical nonsense. As Fairbairn notes, "Thus did God in the method of creation give clear testimony to the headship of man—to his right, and also his obligation, to hold directly of God and stand under law only to Him; while woman, being formed for his helpmeet and partner, stands under law to her husband, and is called to act for God in him. And simply by inverting this relative position and calling—the helpmeet assuming the place of the head or guide, and the head facilely yielding to her governance—was the happy constitution of paradise overthrown, and everything involved in disorder and evil."<sup>120</sup>

### **The Union of Christ and the Church**

In a section devoted to the theology of and proper behavior in Christian marriage relationships, Paul applies the one flesh analogy (he quotes Gen. 2:24 LXX) primarily to Jesus Christ and His bride—the church (Eph. 5:32). After speaking of the Christ-like love a husband must render to his wife, the apostle goes on a blessed tangent and says, "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of his body, and of his flesh and of his bones. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:29-32).

Paul normally uses the word "mystery" to refer to something that remained hidden but now has been revealed (e.g., see Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19); in particular, things that were obscure or hidden in the Old Testament but now have been fully disclosed to Christ. With this meaning in mind, it is possible that the apostle is speaking of the way that the coming of Christ has revealed in a much more complete form, how earthly marriage between one man and one woman is intended to demonstrate the intimate union between Christ and the church. Others note that the apostle speaks of "a great mystery" and, thus, consider the teaching about the union of Christ and the church to be exceptionally profound or deep. As Hodge notes, "The technical designation of this union in theological language is 'mystical,' because it so far transcends all the analogies of earthly relationships, in the intimacy of its connection, and the transforming power of its influence, and in the excellence of its consequences."<sup>121</sup>

In either case, only human marriage and what it involves comes close to describing the intimate, vital, and spiritual union between Christ and His people. Regarding this union there are a number of characteristics. (1) It is *organic* in the sense that Jesus and all true believers form one body (cf. Jn. 15:5; 1 Cor. 6:15-19; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:15, 16; 5:29, 30). The church is the body

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<sup>120</sup> Patrick Fairbairn, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956 [1874]), 128.

<sup>121</sup> A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan and, [1860, 79] 1972), 483.

of Christ which exists in an indissoluble union. All members of the body derive their spiritual life and nourishment from Jesus and the body loves, honors, worships and serves Him. (2) The union is *vital*, for the Savior imparts His salvation victory and spiritual life and ability on account of the efficacy of His death and resurrection. The living Redeemer applies His redemptive work directly to His people (Gal. 4:19-20; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5). (3) This union is applied and effected by the *Holy Spirit*. As a reward for His redemptive obedience, the ascended divine-human Mediator imparts the Holy Spirit to indwell, and empower and form the church—the spiritual body of Christ. “Through the Holy Spirit Christ now dwells in believers, unites them to Himself, and knits them together in a holy unity, I Cor. 6:17; 12:13, II Cor. 3:17, 18; Gal. 3:2, 3.”<sup>122</sup> (4) A believers union with Christ is *personal*. Everyone who is regenerated by the Holy Spirit is born-again because of the vital union they had with the Savior when He suffered, died and rose again. The Spirit, in regeneration and effectual calling, imparts saving faith to each Christian directly and thus life flows immediately to each elect person in regeneration and this life continues through a perpetual bond with the glorified Redeemer. (5) This union *transforms* believers more and more into the image of Christ according to His human nature. Sanctification or growth in holiness occurs because of Christ's Spirit within us. All true believers “have fellowship with him in the transforming, assimilating power of his life, making them like him.... And thus believers are made to bear fruit in Christ, both in their bodies and spirits, which are his (Jn. 15:5; 2 Cor. 12:9; 1 Jn. 1:6).”<sup>123</sup>

For Paul, the joining of Adam and Eve in marriage after their creation (Gen. 2:24) is the closest possible earthly model of the union between Christ and the church. “Moreover, the union between Christ and the church is also the fulfillment of God’s purpose for creation—the uniting of all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Believers are to be not only imitators of Christ (5:1-2) but also the historical continuation of his body.”<sup>124</sup> The earthly marriages between men and women that God established at creation will come to a complete and final end at the second coming of Christ. But that to which the original marriage bond pointed, the union of Christ and the church, will endure in all its blessedness and richness through all eternity.

## **The Creation or Dominion Mandate**

In verse 26 Jehovah speaks and makes clear that man was to be created in his image to rule over the entire lower creation: “Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, overall the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Then, in verse 28, we have the inspired comments of Moses telling us what God told Adam and Eve immediately after they were created: “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” The dominion

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 484.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 485.

<sup>124</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: 1-17*, 185.

mandate is the first revelation of God to mankind. It is both a blessing and an imperative. It comes, in both cases, directly after statements regarding man's being (both male and female are God's image) because man is designed by God to rule and has an innate constitutional urge to dominion. The dominion over the lower creation is a natural consequence of who we are. Man is given the responsibility to exercise dominion under God over the entire earth in a number of ways.

First, man must be fruitful and multiply in order to fill the earth with people. God gave the animals the ability to procreate and called it a blessing. But with man, He does not merely pronounce a blessing over him; He speaks a blessing to him. Jehovah's plan from the very beginning was for humanity to spread over the entire globe. As Isaiah says, "For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD, and there is no other" (Isa. 45:18). Marriage under normal circumstances has as one of its main purposes the procreation of children. Within the marriage bond *alone*, which involves a man and a woman, the bearing of children is natural, honorable and blessed. The bearing of children outside of marriage or the adoption of children by sodomites is wicked and will bring a curse upon society. God's plan for planet earth has always been a worldwide dominion. This cannot occur if people do not have enough children to expand the race.

Today, in the secular humanistic cultures of Europe and Russia there is negative population growth because the Christian concept of marriage and the family has been replaced by hedonism. The purpose of life in Western societies is no longer godly dominion but, rather, the fulfillment of sinful pleasures. Because children are time-consuming, expensive and involve a great deal responsibility, they are often viewed negatively. They are considered a hindrance to having fun and living life to the fullest; so, many people have pets instead or have only one child after spending many years in the lifestyle of debauchery. The result (if Christian revival does not come to the West) will be the slow death of the West and its replacement in Europe by Muslims. The widespread acceptance of fornication, birth control and abortion by Western nations brings its own covenant sanctions. The secularistic, hedonistic Europeans will shrivel and become oppressed by evil, demonic, totalitarian Muslims. Marriage is the normal lawful state for men and women and a central divine purpose of marriage is procreation. This passage is not only an implicit repudiation of the ancient fertility cults ("His promise makes any participation in such cults or the use of other devices to secure fertility not only redundant, but a mark of unbelief."<sup>125</sup> [cf. Gen. 16; 30:14-15]); but, also, the anti-procreation concepts of marriage in Europe and America. In prosperous secularist nations, fruitfulness and the ability to multiply is viewed as a curse not a blessing. Godly dominion has been renounced for sexual anarchy and materialism.

The command to be fruitful and multiply is given to the first married couple or family for other reasons besides the fact that all sexual or procreative acts outside of heterosexual marriage are unlawful. We learn from other portions of Scripture that private property, economic activity and scientific progress rests not with the church, or the state, but with the family. The church is

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<sup>125</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33.

the means of grace and the state bears the sword of justice, but neither is responsible for direct economic and scientific progress. The church may own meeting places and theological schools, but it is not an economic or scientific organization. The state, being responsible for civil defense, has a scientific and economic interest in weapons systems and military training institutes; but the state has no biblical mandate to engage in economic activity and own property outside of the limited parameters of civil justice and defense. As Rushdoony notes, “The earth is indeed the Lord’s as is all dominion, but God has chosen to give dominion over the earth to man, subject to his law-Word, and property is a central aspect of that dominion. The absolute and transcendental title to property is the Lord’s; the present and historical title to property is man’s. The ownership of property does not leave this world when it is denied to man; it is simply transferred to the state.”<sup>126</sup>

Second, man is to exercise “dominion over” (vs. 26, 28) or “subdue” (v. 28) the earth. In verse 26 we learn that man is God’s image and, because man is like God, he is king over the earth and everything in it (the fish, the birds, every living creature—“the lower creation”). The first verb *rāda*, translated “have dominion,” is frequently used in the Old Testament to describe the authority and rule that humans have over others: for example, a master over a hired servant (Lev. 25:43, 46, 53); an administrator over his employees (1 Kgs. 5:16); a king over his subjects (Ps. 72:8; 110:2); the rule of one nation over another (Lev. 26:17; Num. 24:19; Neh. 9:28; Ps. 68:27; Isa. 14: 2, 6; Ezek. 29:15); and, a shepherd’s supervision of his flock (Ezek. 34:4).<sup>127</sup> In verse 28 a second verb “subdue” is added for clarification. Man’s role includes a certain kind of domination over the earth and its creatures. The verb “subdue” (*kābas*) *after* the fall often refers to the strong use of force and even the use of physical violence. It is used to describe “subjecting someone to slavery (2 Chr. O28:10; Neh. 5:5; Jer. 34:11, 16), to physical abuse and assault (Esth. 7:8), to treading (sins) underfoot (Mic. 7:19 and Zech. 9:15, where it parallels ‘devour’), and to militarily subjecting the population of the city (Num. 32:22, 29; Josh. 18:1).”<sup>128</sup>

Although the term “subdue” (*kābas*) often has harsh, negative and even violent connotation in the Old Testament *after* this narrative, there are a number of reasons why it must not be interpreted in such a manner in this context.

(1) This command is given before Adam’s fall and the entrance of death into the created order. Adam, at this time, was not permitted to hunt, kill or eat any of the living creatures on the face of the earth. We read in Genesis 9:3 that it is only long after this command, after the worldwide flood, that this dominion is extended to include killing animals for food (note, however, that the killing of clean animals for use in the sacrifice of the burnt offering begins almost immediately after the fall; see Gen. 4:4). Before the fall, animals, like man, were to work, but the infliction of pain and suffering was not permitted.

(2) A study of the moral law indicates that godly rule must not be a harsh or severe rule. For example, in Leviticus the poor people of God who are forced into servitude due to poverty

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<sup>126</sup> R. J. Rushdoony, *The institutes of Biblical Law* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973, 77), 471.

<sup>127</sup> See Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, 137.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 139.

are to be ruled over with love and compassion. Jehovah says to the Israelites, “You shall not rule over him with rigor [i.e. excessive force or harshness], but you shall fear your God” (v. 43; cf. v. 46). In addition, godly kings are supposed to be devoted to the personal well-being of their subjects, especially the poorest and most vulnerable members of society (e.g., see Ps. 72:12-14). Consequently, when speaking of ecclesiastical rulers, Jesus described leadership in terms of great humility and service to others (Mk. 9:35), not lording it over or mistreating them. By upholding and enforcing God’s moral law and justice system, rulers promote a godly law order that ensures peace and prosperity for all their subjects. Proper rule or dominion must be a finite reflection of God’s holiness, justice, compassion and kindness. It is only when men seek to rule autonomously and become a law unto themselves (i.e. positivistic arbitrary evolving law) that men become tyrants and rule like beasts (see Rev. 13:1-4, 15). Any attempts to rule autonomously would be a rejection of God’s authority and the true purpose of the dominion mandate. Such a rule, which has come to dominate the thinking and world view of the Western nations, is a satanic form of dominion, not a godly dominion.

(3) That this dominion indicates a use for productive work and not an unbridled exploitation and subjection of the animals is demonstrated by the fact that “subdue the land” in Chapter 1 is a semantic parallel to “till and keep the land” and 2:5 and 15.<sup>129</sup> Dominion over the earth involved building villages and cities and developing agriculture. Before the use of gasoline engines, that were thousands of years in man’s future, animals were the primary tillers of the ground and overall workers of the land (e.g., moving timber, stone and the like). Man as a superior rational creature was the brains, while the animals were to be the brawn. Animals would work for man, who in turn would care for his animals by providing food, water and shelter. An animal that worked for a man who treated it with kindness and respect as creature of God was not abused but privileged.

(4) That dominion over the fish, birds and animals involves caring conservation can be deduced by two events in the Genesis narrative. One is God's requirement that Adam name the animals. As noted, the naming of the animals was a scientific endeavor, for in the Hebraistic worldview something was to be named according to its nature. Dominion over the animal creation, therefore, is not merely economic or practical but scientific. Man is to rule not simply by giving orders or forcing creatures to act in a certain manner, but also by understanding God’s creation. Man’s dominion is to be intelligent and scientific. The harnessing of animal, insect, fish or bird talents requires an understanding of their abilities. An eagle, for example, cannot be used as a carrier pigeon. Moreover, a rhinoceros is not a wise choice to plow a field. The animals are to serve man as companions in dominion. This will require knowledge and skill. Another crucial related event is Noah’s preservation of all the various life forms from the worldwide flood by obeying God’s voice in building and furnishing the ark (Gen. 6:20; 7:2-5). Noah was God’s conservationist. If he was to fulfill the dominion mandate (Gen. 9:1), he needed to nurture life and preserve it so it could fulfill its created purpose.

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 139-140.

There are a number of other important things about this dominion that merit our attention. First, the dominion mandate is a natural and logical consequence of man's creation in the image of God. The task of dominion is so tied into man's created being that some kind of dominion over the lower creation is inescapable. Man as man will gain some kind of understanding and control over the lower creation. People can attempt to suppress what they are by fleeing into an irresponsible nomadic, hippie or monastic lifestyle; but, due to God's created reality, they must still work to an extent and alter their environment to eat and live. Even the American Indians who are often (incorrectly) viewed as living in perfect harmony with nature had to cut down trees, fish, hunt, butcher and skin animals, and gather roots, pine nuts and berries. The animals had a great fear of the Indians and gave them deference as superior creatures. The only reason that people think of the Indians as living in harmony with nature is their small numbers due to disease and intertribal warfare and murder. If the Indians had population growth, they would have had to manage their environment more carefully to keep their food supply safe (e.g., the Plains Indians would have to stop running herds of buffalo off cliffs, an incredibly cruel and wasteful practice). "For man to live is to exercise dominion."<sup>130</sup>

What is crucial about the dominion mandate is that God gives this task to man through special revelation so that it is clear that this mandate is to be God-centered. All of man's endeavors are to be done to God's glory and thus a lawful exercise of dominion can only flow from obedience to God's revealed will. When men seek to exercise an autonomous and humanistic dominion apart from God and His law order, they create slaves to the state and a kind of hell on earth.

Second, *this command precedes the fall* and the creation of Israel and thus applies to all mankind whether saved or not, prior to the second coming of Christ. Work then, when it serves its God-given intent, is a blessing and not a curse. Meaningful, God-glorifying work was and remains an important part of God's plan for mankind. It is often forgotten that the fourth commandment is not simply a command to rest on the seventh day, but also an injunction to work for six days. God placed man on this earth to work and not to sit around in the pursuit of pleasure. Work continues after the fall, but now is plagued by a curse and thus is often frustrating and difficult (cf. Gen. 3:17-18). It is important to note that work itself is not a curse, but only the sweat and difficulties that attend it. In light of the dominion mandate Christians ought to delight in work and enjoy it. Those who seek to escape it through a bohemian lifestyle or by becoming dependent on the state are in revolt against God and His word. For those who are tempted to murmur against God because of the curse on work, they must continually focus on the redemptive work of Christ, for the Savior's death and resurrection is progressively overcoming this curse as believers work to establish the kingdom of God over every area of life.

Tragically, the vast majority of evangelicals and even some Reformed communions (e.g., the Bible Presbyterian Church) have denied the *post-fall* validity and applicability of this command due to the influence of such unscriptural theological trends as: dispensationalism, a retreatist very narrow kind of pietism, and defeatist pessimistic eschatological systems (e.g.,

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<sup>130</sup> Gary North, *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (Tyler, TX: The Institute for Christian Economics, 1982), 29.

dispensational premillennialism and negative forms of amillennialism). It is popular today to speak about plucking some souls from the fire in time to escape the great tribulation through the rapture. We are told that it is pointless to work to build Christian institutions, political systems and ways of conducting economics, for the world will never be saved and will always be in the hands of the devil. Sadly, such pessimistic, unscriptural ways of thinking cause behavior that does lead to temporary defeats of the establishment of godly dominion over whole cultures and nations. Such thinking is soundly refuted by the Great Commission of Christ, which is a salvific reaffirmation of the dominion covenant, that applies not only to individuals but all nations (see section on Mt. 28:18ff below). As long as the vast majority of professing Christians believe that the church must *not* work to bring the whole world under the rule of Christ's law, societal sanctification will not advance. In fact, most churches' views regarding godly dominion are in such decline that nearly all evangelical Christians regard the idea of an explicitly Christian nation, which faithfully follows God's moral laws on justice and penology, with horror. They prefer the rule of secular humanists and pluralists to biblical rule because *they despise God's law*. Without being aware of it, many professing Christians are following two pagan philosophies that encourage a retreat from responsibility: "*manichaeism* and *neoplatonism*. Manichaeism is the idea that the creation is somehow innately sinful, and that the attributes of the flesh, especially power, are evil. Neoplatonism holds that 'matter' is somehow inferior to 'spirit,' and thus unimportant."<sup>131</sup>

Evangelicals, who are opposed to a continuation of the dominion mandate into the new covenant era, accuse Christian Reconstructionists and establishmentarians of seeking to establish the kingdom of God on earth through political means. They argue that such a comprehensive understanding of Christ's dominion is a new expression of the "social gospel" as advocated by the modernists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This accusation is erroneous and must be rejected on two counts. (1) The "social gospel" of Christian liberalism flowed from their repudiation of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. They rejected Scripture and replaced it with human autonomy and secular humanism. They kept the religious terminology but redefined it according to their unbelieving humanistic presuppositions. They rejected the true and living God of the Bible and replaced Him with humanity or the state as the expressed will of humanity. They openly repudiated the moral laws of God revealed in Scripture and replaced them with relativistic, evolving man-made law. Thus, they are apostate enemies of Jesus Christ and His law order. They seek salvation not through Christ but through an all-powerful state. Sound Christian Reconstructionists and Reformed churches which still adhere to the establishment principle (i.e. the establishment of an explicitly Bible-believing Christian civil magistrate) are the opposite of Christian liberals. They adhere strongly to biblical inerrancy and traditional Christian orthodoxy and simply want civil government and all earthly institutions to submit to the crown rights of Jesus Christ by ruling him only in strict accordance with biblical law. Ironically, the modernist "social gospel" advocates have stolen the old Reformed and Puritan optimistic post-millennial eschatology, merged it with social Darwinism and Marxism and twisted it into a statist power

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 28.

religion. The establishment principle and what is called “theonomy” today are essentially the standard Reformed positions of the 16th and 17th centuries. Most modern “conservative” Reformed churches in America today have adopted an escapist, Anabaptist, pluralistic concept of civil government.

(2) The modernist concept of establishing the kingdom is a statist, top-down, coercive program of social change. The “experts” will take power, redistribute the wealth, and form all sorts of centralized bureaucracies that will control the masses and take care of every concern from the cradle to the grave. Theonomists or biblical establishmentarians believe in a bottom-up theory of social change. The key to a Christian social order is the preaching of the true gospel, establishment of new churches and the preaching of the whole counsel of God. If the people do not believe in the Christ of Scripture, they will not voluntarily govern themselves by His law-word. The modernist, in principle, along with Chairman Mao, believes that power flows from the barrel of a gun. The Bible-believing Christian believes that true power flows from the work of the Holy Spirit on men’s hearts, which is a consequence of the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Those professing Christians who deny the validity of the dominion covenant have offered nothing in its place except retreat and defeat. Their denial, however, does not mean that they themselves have ceased exercising dominion; they are simply doing so in an inconsistent, haphazard, grossly deficient manner. They know that statism, socialism, abortion and sodomite rights are wrong but, by rejecting God’s Old Testament moral laws and a post-millennial eschatology, they fight with their hands tied behind their backs.

Third, the command to subdue the earth implies that the lower creation, although intrinsically good (Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25), is in God’s eyes somehow incomplete without man’s work of dominion upon it. This means that the radical environmentalist understanding of nature as perfect without man is clearly unscriptural. Jehovah made the world to be studied, administered, worked upon and civilized by man. This point (we note once again) does not mean that men are to pillage, destroy or denigrate the natural world. No, men are to use it wisely and leave it in better condition than it was before. This observation also refutes the idea of pantheists, nature worshipers and animists that man is to be ruled by nature instead of the other way around. In the evolutionary scheme, man is simply another product of natural impersonal forces. For a person to attempt to rule over nature would be contrary to his origins and foolish. Men are to be passive as they allow themselves to be dominated by the natural order. Often behind such thinking is erroneous assumption that man must worship nature or divinize it in order to protect it. No, the problem with men and their ill-treatment of the lower creation is not Christianity or the dominion mandate but sin. Man is to rule over nature not in any way he pleases, but only in obedience to special revelation. After the fall, men need God’s word to instruct them on how to conduct the task of dominion. But in order to understand God’s word, they need the illumination of the Holy Spirit which only comes as a result of regeneration of faith in Christ. As North ably points out, “[Unredeemed] Man is... a destroyer, an ethical rebel who seeks release from the comprehensive requirements of God's law-order. Nevertheless, ‘man, the destroyer’ is not the

result of ‘man the controller’: he is the product of ‘man, the ethical rebel.’ It is not man’s dominion over the earth that is illegitimate, but rather man’s attempt to dominate the earth apart from God’s control over man. The only foundation of man’s right to dominion is his conformity to the requirements of God.”<sup>132</sup> And the only foundation of conformity to God’s law-word is union with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6).

Fourth, in the post-fall world, the dominion mandate can only be truly fulfilled through the person and work of Christ. Before man sinned, the acquisition of scientific knowledge, the improvement, development and ascetic beautification of the lower creation and progress over time in agriculture, economics and the arts would naturally have been done with obedience toward Jehovah and the purpose of glorifying Him. Without sin and depravity, man would have had an unfallen creation to study and daily communion and communication with God to help him in this crucial task. But with the entrance into sin, not only is the natural realm fallen, but all men (Jesus excluded) come into this world as covenant breakers who continually suppresses the truth about God revealed through nature; who are spiritually blind and have an innate hatred of the true and living God. Consequently, all men come into this world as secular humanists who want to create their own laws, religions and realities. Therefore, if the dominion mandate is to fulfill its original God-glorifying purpose, which grows out of communion with Jehovah and obedience to His revealed will, then in a post-fall world it can only flow out of Christ’s redemptive work.

Given this biblical reality, we should not be surprised to learn that the Great Commission of Jesus, given soon after His victorious resurrection, is essentially the salvific, post-fall version of the dominion mandate. If Adam had not sinned and the fellowship and communication with Jehovah had not been severed, he would have naturally and happily glorified God in all his endeavors. But, in this post-fall world, people must first be saved by Jesus Christ before they will love, understand and observe God’s word and apply it to every area of life. Therefore, the second Adam, on the basis of His completed, victorious redemptive work, gives His people the new and only way to achieve godly dominion in this world. On the mountain He commanded His disciples saying, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always” (Mt. 28:19-20).

Since the only way to fulfill the dominion mandate (as originally intended) is given in these injunctions, we will briefly consider their meaning. The main verb, “make disciples,” is a command and gives the three surrounding participles (go, baptize, teach) an imperatival sense. The expression “make disciples” makes it clear that godly dominion can only take place when hearts and minds are first committed to Christ. One must be a follower of the second Adam if one is to build up the kingdom of grace and work for the restoration of all things. The first Adam through sin brought death (Rom. 5:12), futility and the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:20, 21) to the created realm; but, the final Adam—the Son of God—brings life, salvation and deliverance, not only to His people (the elect) but to the lower creation itself (Rom. 8:21).

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<sup>132</sup> Gary North, *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (Tyler, TX: The Institute for Christian Economics, 1982), 33.

Christian trinitarian baptism is the initiatory rite into the faith and a sign and seal of regeneration and thus is placed before teaching. Baptism signifies union with Christ and entails faith in Him, cleansing from sin and a setting apart unto a life of sanctification and service to God. Because of unsaved man's inherent depravity, he cannot know the things of God nor do anything that pleases God. Thus, personal salvation is the starting point of obedience to Christ. Baptism also is a public sign that one has been removed from the sphere of Satan's reign and mastery to a new life where one is under the sovereign rule of the Redeemer in His kingdom of grace. Godly dominion can only begin when a person, by the power of the Holy Spirit, due to the efficacy of Jesus' death and resurrection, moves from one realm of authority (Satan's kingdom of darkness and rebellion) to another (Christ's kingdom of life, light and grace).

Without the Messiah's work of salvation, man's urge to dominion is rooted in human autonomy and thus is perverted and demonic. Men after the fall, apart from grace, do not seek to glorify God but to be God. They do not look to Jehovah for meaning, purpose and law; but, rather, cling to human autonomy and seek to determine what is right and wrong for themselves (Gen. 3:5). They adhere to a satanic philosophy, reject true knowledge and seek to glorify self through an arbitrary philosophy of power. "It is power for the sake of power, and its goal is 'a boot stamping on a human face—forever.'"<sup>133</sup> Its alternative in history has been anarchy where the power religion is simply decentralized, in which the strong still oppress the weak. Thus, it is crucial that we understand that it is not a question of dominion versus no dominion. But, rather, what kind of dominion will there be: a godly dominion that flows from faith in Christ or the dominion of unregenerate demonic men who seek their own power and glory instead of God's?

The salvific path to dominion also involves teaching *all things* that Christ taught. Jesus taught the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament (Mt. 5:17-20; 19:4-6; 24:37-39) and the binding authority of the Old Testament moral law (Mt. 5:17ff), the whole Bible is necessary in order to fulfill the dominion mandate. (Paul notes that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" [2 Tim. 3:16-17]). Our Redeemer has a comprehensive, unlimited authority over every area of life. He speaks to every area either directly or by implication in His holy word. Consequently, we must not limit the Great Commission or the cultural mandate to evangelism, spiritual matters, or church affairs. "The whole counsel of God" (Ac. 20:27) is to be taught to all nations. Therefore, after people believe in Jesus, are saved and become a vital part of the local church, they are required to apply the Bible to education, science, the arts, architecture, the civil law code, the civil magistrate, the courts, foreign policy, penology, and so on. Christ is not simply the King over the church but over everything. He has "all authority in heaven and on earth."

The idea that is common in evangelical circles, that the Great Commission is merely a call to evangelism, that Jesus' reign is for some time in the future; that the world (e.g., politics, economics, penology, civil law, etc.) should be left in the hands of the devil while Christians focus on personal witnessing, is a great reduction of Christianity and a denial of the dominion

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<sup>133</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 449.

mandate. It also explicitly denies the teaching of Acts and the epistles: that we are to expose the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11) and destroy everything that is raised up against the knowledge of God; that every thought must be taken captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5); that God “commands all men everywhere [including kings, college professors, scientists, Supreme Court justices, presidents and members of Congress] to repent” (Ac. 17:30). “The salvation of man includes his restoration into the image of God and the calling implicit in that image, to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion. Hence, the proclamation of the gospel was also the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, according to all the New Testament.”<sup>134</sup> Evangelism and church planting is supposed to lead to personal, family and corporate sanctification. Sanctification does not stop at the prayer closet or the doors of a church building. If the majority of people in society professed to be converted to Christ, yet remain wedded to pluralism (i.e. the state-sanctioned open practice of idolatry and false prophecy), and the anti-Christian secular humanistic education system, the legalization of abortion, homosexuality, adultery, bestiality and fornication, a fiat money supply, and arbitrary, positivistic statist laws that explicitly contradict Scripture, then how can such people claim to be sanctified? Where is the evidence of their repentance and the fruit of their faith? Such thinking has more in common with neo-platonism and antinomianism than the teaching of Scripture.

When churches fail to teach all that Jesus has commanded and arbitrarily apply sanctification to only “spiritual” concerns, the rest has been and continues to be a disaster for church and society. The mainline Protestant denominations abandoned the word of God during the 1920s and 1930s. The effect was apostate, wicked denominations and a culture in decline. The void left by the demise of most of Protestantism has been filled by atheism, secular humanism, the occult, New Age mysticism, socialism, gross immorality, the decline of the family and rank hedonism. With the abandonment of the Bible has come an increasing abandonment of the rule of law. Statism has followed in the wake of modernistic theology.

Fundamentalist and evangelical churches which have adopted dispensationalist doctrines have also failed to teach everything that Christ has commanded. They teach that most of the Old Testament is irrelevant to the Christian; that God has not provided blueprints for the Christian reconstruction of society. By failing to teach “the whole counsel of God” Fundamentalists unwittingly handed over our culture, institutions, courts and legislatures to the secular humanistic modernists and atheists. By teaching a reductionist version of the Great Commission, evangelicals have increasingly shifted toward Christian existentialism. The goal is not the Christianization of whole nations but the building of experiential ghettos. “Get saved and come to church each week and have a wonderful experience.” The modern evangelical church does not lead in the area of science and culture but rather follows. Churches are often patterned after Hollywood with crass entertainment, jokes and pop-psychology. The salvation of individuals is emphasized but the false gospel of Arminianism is preached (i.e. man has veto power and sovereignty over God). Once a person makes “a decision” for Christ, he is told not to waste his

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

time changing society but to wait for the imminent rapture. The modern evangelical church is impotent; it has lost its saltiness.

Jesus did not teach or endorse a retreatist, pietistic form of Christianity. Christ taught a dynamic, militant, nation-changing, culture-transforming doctrine. The church is to go into every nation and preach the gospel. Churches are to be established with church governors and a “whole counsel of God” preaching ministry. As more and more people in society are saved, baptized and taught and then apply the word of God to their personal lives, family lives, business activities, civil government, education, economics and so on, society will become transformed. The church is to keep going, baptizing and teaching until every earthly institution and every nation has submitted to Jesus Christ. A nation is not totally disciplined until it explicitly acknowledges the kingship and authority of Christ. The goal of the Great Commission is that each nation would explicitly acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus in their constitutions, legislatures and courts; and that each nation would covenant with Christ.

The dominion mandate teaches us that we were created in God’s image to be responsible stewards over His creative work. We are here to exercise dominion for the Lord Jesus Christ who has been given all authority as a result of His redemptive obedience. Unbelievers, because they still retain the image of God in the broad sense, have made great contributions in music, art, science, architecture and technology; however, they are not doing these things to glorify Christ but self or humanity. They view themselves not as responsible stewards under God but as autonomous owners. We cannot deny the progress of technology, music, medicine and engineering made over man’s history. But all these achievements will be the spoils inherited by Christians, for those who forget God will be turned into hell and cast into outer darkness. The dominion of sinful man, which is perverted and destructive to this earth, must progressively be replaced by the true lawful dominion of godly men who love and follow Christ. The people of God must be trained not to see life arbitrarily or in a narrow escapist, pietistic framework; but, rather, must live in terms of God’s purpose dominion in and through them. This gives our work purpose and meaning and helps us live with a future-oriented, victorious outlook.<sup>135</sup>

## God’s Provision of Food

After the animals and man are created, man’s nature is defined and his task in life given, God tells Adam how human and animal life is to be sustained: “And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit

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<sup>135</sup> Although Western civilization has rejected its Christian roots, adopted macro-evolutionary theory, secular humanism and relativistic ethics and thus is in great decline, we must never forget that the great achievements of the Western nations are due to Europe’s adherence to Christianity. As David Chilton notes, “The whole rise of Western Civilization—science and technology, medicine, the arts, constitutionalism, the jury system, free enterprise, literacy, increasing productivity, a rising standard of living, the high status of women—is attributable to one major fact: *the West has been transformed by Christianity*. True, the transformation is not yet complete. There are many battles ahead. But the point is that, even in what is still largely an early Christian civilization, God has showered us with blessings” (*Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* [Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1985], 7).

yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food,' and it was so" (Gen. 1:29-30). In this narrative there are a number of interesting things to consider.

First, there is an emphasis on the fact that all the food provided for man and the animals comes from God: "See or behold I have given you." The opening word "behold" calls attention to Jehovah's gracious bestowal of food. The verb "I have given" (*nathatti*) is in the perfect tense and indicates that God's provision of food for man and the animals is firmly fixed and abiding in the created order according to God's providence. When Christians give thanks unto God for their food and pray for their daily bread, they are acknowledging the truth of this passage. The Hebrews would recognize that God's provision of food for Adam and his posterity stands in sharp contrast to the Mesopotamian religions which taught that man existed to supply the gods with food and nourishment.<sup>136</sup> That God provides for us should keep us humble and thankful. "He gives us all things richly to enjoy, not only for necessity, but plenty, dainties, and varieties, for ornament and delight. How much are we indebted! How careful should we be, as we live upon God's bounty, to live to his glory!"<sup>137</sup>

Second, before the fall we see that mankind and the animal world were vegetarian. Man was to eat plants and fruits, while the animals ate primarily plants. In chapter 2 we learn that Adam could eat from any tree in the garden with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man was given an abundance of edible plants and fruits that were wholesome, helpful and nourishing including all kinds of vegetables, herbs, grains, legumes, and fruits. "In a marvelously rich and beautiful world the rich bounty of very many different kinds of herbs and trees provided the finest proof of the creator's goodness."<sup>138</sup> Before the fall and the dominance of weeds ("thorns and thistles"; 3:18) gardening and farming would have been sweet work and not toilsome as it is now. That mankind was to be vegetarian before the fall indicates that death, suffering and slaughter, even of animal life, were *not* permitted in paradise. That no death existed before the fall and vegetarianism was the norm is supported by God's own description of the coming eschatological age of gospel victory in Isaiah 11:7: "The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." The pre-fall world was one of supreme peace, even between animals. In the pristine paradise every living creature existed in perfect safety, without any fear. One can deduce that what are now dangerous predators, such as bears and lions, before the fall had different, peaceful natures. Those who protest the biblical position based on the teeth, claws and digestive tracts of modern carnivores fail to take into account God's use of *micro*-evolution (i.e. His sovereign providential changes to animals, reptiles, birds, etc.) to make creatures live, function and survive better in their *post-fall* environments. Nature "red in tooth and claw" is clearly part of the curse and must never be thought as normative for the pre-fall world or the post-second coming earth. Those who protest

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<sup>136</sup> See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33.

<sup>137</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:11.

<sup>138</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 97.

the vegetarian position by arguing that Genesis 1:29-30 does not explicitly forbid the consumption of meat do not understand the nature of God's commandments. When God says that Adam was *only* allowed to eat the substance of vegetable matter, and products of plants, this automatically excludes the flesh of animals, which would involve death, suffering and butchery. In this context, to say that a non-bloody type of sustenance is permissible disallows the need to give a list of non-permissible bloody items. This point is supported by the fact that God did reveal a specific exception regarding the fruit of one particular tree; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). The issue of whether man could eat things such as milk and honey, which do not involve suffering, death or butchery, is less clear. Honey and milk are processed plant materials that could be used with no discomfort to bees or cows. "The critically minded should not forget that a being endowed with the high intelligence that we find in the first man need no more than a broad outline to guide him to a choice pleasing to God and beneficial for himself."<sup>139</sup>

There is disagreement among scholars as to when mankind was allowed to eat meat after the fall. Some argue, based on the fact that those who followed God are observed offering sacrifices of clean, domesticated animals right after the fall (e.g., Gen. 4:2-4), that the consumption of meat began almost immediately. After all, if animals such as sheep and goats were kept, killed, butchered and offered as a burnt sacrifice, what would be wrong with killing and butchering food for one's family? Many others—based on Genesis 9:3 where Jehovah explicitly gives Noah and his posterity the right to eat meat—believe that prior to the flood meat was forbidden to man. If the godly line had already been eating meat for centuries, the revelation in Genesis 9:2-4 seems unnecessary and out of place.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps for this reason, the Jews were of the opinion that meat was not permitted until after the worldwide flood (see T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59.2).<sup>141</sup> Matthew Henry says that the flood had caused so much devastation to the earth that God chose this as the time to enlarge man's diet to include flesh.<sup>142</sup> After the flood, there is nothing nobler or more ethical or even more helpful about vegetarianism. Thus Paul says that in the latter times some will depart from the Christian faith and command men to abstain from certain "foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. 4:3-4).

After the provision of food for man and lower creatures is mentioned, the narrator once again declares, "and it was so" (v. 30). Everything happened exactly as God willed and ordained. Jehovah made the world in such a way that man and beast had an abundant and sufficient variety of food the moment they were created. The food was suitable to their natures and appetites and

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<sup>139</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 98.

<sup>140</sup> Those who hold to the view that meat was permitted as food immediately after the fall argue that Genesis "9:3 is ratifying the post-fall practice of meat-eating rather than inaugurating it" (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 34). The problem with this interpretation is the mention of animals now having a fear and dread of man which clearly will be the result of man's hunting the animals. If man had already been hunting for centuries, the statement about the animals having a fear and dread of man is even more unexplainable.

<sup>141</sup> See John Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, 1:11.

<sup>142</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:69-70.

God created food sources that continue or are self-sustaining throughout the ages. In the post-fall world, local famines arise because of droughts, diseases and wars. In the modern era most famines are rooted in government policies (e.g., socialism, communism, wars, etc.).

## Divine Appreciation

In verse 31 the narrator closes the creation narrative by modifying the appreciation formula in a number of ways to emphasize God's stamp of approval on all of His creative works: "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day." The infinite and eternal God reflects upon the masterpiece of His own wisdom and the product of His own power. He looks upon it and delights in it. There are two features in this verse that set the sixth day apart from the other days.

First, the whole creation receives an even stronger praise than each completed individual part. The finished whole is declared to be "very good" instead of simply "good." "The harmony and perfection of the completed heavens and earth express more adequately the character of their creator than any of the separate components can."<sup>143</sup> Everything that God made was good; there are no defects or flaws in God's creation. The creation was exactly what Jehovah wanted it to be. The things in the created world that presently are associated with evil and calamity such as diseases, famines, deadly earthquakes, hurricanes, biting insects, dangerous plants and devouring predators were not part of the original creation. Everything bad or evil is the result of Adam's sin. The expression is stronger here because man—the climax of the creation who bears the image of God and works to His glory and who exists for Jehovah and His pleasure—has come. The creation is "very good" because it was created by a good God who made it according to His nature without one misplaced stroke. It is "very good," for it is perfectly fit for the purpose it was made: to bring godly dominion to this world. It is "very good," for it meets all of man's physical needs and man is the lord over the lower creation. "The glory and goodness, the beauty and harmony of God's works, both of providence and grace, as this of creation, will best appear when they are perfected."<sup>144</sup>

Second, instead of referring to each day indiscriminately (a second day, a third day, etc.) the definite article is added to mark this day off as particularly special: "the sixth day." This is the last climactic creative day of God. Both the Old and New Testaments endorse this assessment as they call upon the people of God to praise and thank Him for His wondrous works of creation. The psalmist writes, "This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great. There the ships sail about; there is that Leviathan which You have made to play there. These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather and; You open Your hand, they are filled with good. Oh LORD,

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<sup>143</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 34.

<sup>144</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:12.

how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions” (Ps. 104:24-28).

The Lord could have created the whole universe and everything in this world in a split-second if He had wanted to do so. He could have said “Let there be a universe and an earth filled with every form of life” and it would come into being immediately; but instead He did it deliberately and progressively step-by-step in six 24 hour days. This raises an obvious question: Why six days? There are a number of reasons. (1) He did it to show His sovereignty; that as a free agent He could do His own work, in His own unique way. (2) The major reason is that He did this as an object lesson to the human race. It was an example of His wisdom, power and goodness. Each step advanced and prepared for the next stage of His creative work. The progressive steps forward, with the creation of man as the capstone of creation, teaches us the importance of mankind in God’s plan. The world was created to be filled with a world-wide godly civilization. This will most certainly be accomplished through the work of Christ in this world.

In addition, Jehovah did it this way to set an example of working for six days and then resting upon the seventh: “Six days is shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all it is in them, and rested the seventh day” (Ex. 20:9, 10, 11). Jehovah had an eye upon man’s need of worship, piety and rest and thus deliberately set a pattern for all mankind to follow.

As God looked upon His work of creation, we should meditate upon what God has done and its implications for us. The creation should stir up our fear, adoration and service to Jehovah. The power and wisdom it took to create the universe should cause us to stand in awe of the true and living God, for the universe is but a speck in His sight. We should take the dominion mandate and its New Covenant expression, the Great Commission, much more seriously. We must also see how the doctrine of creation is foundational to many crucial biblical teachings. “Let us...stir up ourselves, and all that is within us, to *worship him that made the heaven, earth, and sea, and the fountains of waters*, according to the tenor of the everlasting gospel, which is preached to every nation, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. All his works, in all places of his dominion, do bless him; and, therefore, *bless thou the Lord, O my soul!*”<sup>145</sup>

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[HOME PAGE](#)

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.