

# OpenTheo

## Genesis 1 (Part 3)



### Genesis - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides an overview of various perspectives on the creation account in Genesis 1. He notes that the origin of the sun, moon, and stars is not universally agreed upon, and that the classification of animals in the Bible is based on ecological zones rather than scientific taxonomy. He discusses human dominion over other creatures and the image of God that humans bear. Gregg also points out that while God is often referred to with masculine pronouns, God's gender is not determined by biology or anatomy.

### Transcript

Genesis 1, Part 1, Sermon on the Mount Alright, let's turn to Genesis Chapter 1 again. I expect we will finish Genesis Chapter 1 in this first hour this morning. And then in our second hour, my desire is to go over that again from another perspective, That is, from a spiritual perspective, as I believe the New Testament to apply it to our spiritual lives.

When we closed our session last time, we were talking about the fourth day and the creation of the heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, and the stars. I want to say something more about that, because there's a lot to say, and I spent some time at the end of our last session talking about how the signs of the Zodiac might in fact be understood to be one of the senses in which it says he made the stars for signs and for seasons and for days and years. Let's read from verse 14, Then God said, Let there be light 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 light in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth. And it was so. Then 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. And 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.

Now, we've already spoken somewhat about this. The suggestion that this was the actual

origin of the sun, moon, and stars is not universally held among Bible-believing Christians. Some people believe that the sun, moon, and stars were actually created earlier than this, but that they were not really visible because of something.

Now, visible would be kind of a strange concept to be using since there was no one to see anything. There were no animals or people to view the sun, moon, and stars, so the idea of them coming into view is a rather abstract thought at this point in time. Nonetheless, it's probable that the story is being told from the earthly perspective, as if there could be an earthly person watching.

After all, it is written for the benefit of people living on earth at the time it was written, and from the perspective of where they stand. It might well be saying that at this point the sun, the moon, and the stars became visible as God cleared up the haze that had perhaps diffused their light up until this point. On the other hand, I've suggested the possibility that He may have actually created them from scratch at this point.

We don't know if He did, but if He did, it's rather significant because it would mean that He had intended, of course, all along for the sun, the moon, and the stars to govern the night and the day, but didn't make them initially to do so. And even if He did make them initially, He didn't make them govern the night and the day until now, which, of course, I would have to say would be intentional. It's not like it was an afterthought on God's part.

He got three days into it and said, Oh, you know, I should have made a sun and moon and stars. I can do it now, better late than never. I don't think that that's how God was thinking.

I believe that God intentionally allowed there to be light and darkness day and night for a few days, even light, plant light, what we call light. The Bible doesn't refer to plants as living, but we would refer to them as living. We know they're made of living cells, just like we are, different kinds of cells.

But there was life which, generally speaking, needs the sun to be sustained. But in this case, for the third day, those plants that normally forever afterward would require the sun did not require the sun. They simply required the light.

And I have assumed that the light prior to the fourth day was the light of God Himself. But that could not be proven. It's just one way of understanding the sequence of events here.

But if God provided light Himself without the sun and stars initially, as I said, it's no doubt in order to get across the idea, which the pagans have never quite gotten straight throughout history, is that the sun is not the source of all things. It's not the source of life. Life was here before the sun was here.

The source of life is God Himself and the glory of God. So that would be, very possibly,

where the light was coming from before this point. Now, it says that the greater light ruled the day.

Clearly that's a reference to the sun. Ruling the day, interesting verb to use, that it ruled the day. Perhaps it means that it just dictated the passage of the hours.

I mean, the time of the day would be determined by the position of the sun. Determined, ruled by. And at night, the moon.

Remember, before they had clocks and watches, they had sundials, and the passing of this shadow of the sun across the dial is how they measured and determined what the hour of the day was. I'm not exactly sure how they determined the hours of the night, but they had some way they did that, because they actually knew when the first watch ended and the second watch of the night. No doubt it was because of, maybe, candles that had markers on them for hours, something like that.

But the sun governed and determined the hours of the day, the moon, the night. And I'd like to make one other observation about that, because it's often made. When God made the sun and the moon, we could ask, why did He make them both? After all, there were stars, or He made stars, to give light at night.

Why the moon, too? You might say, well, the stars don't give enough light at night to really help man to function in the dark. But men were not intended to function in the dark. Until the invention of the electric light in ultra-modern history, people just didn't go out at night, because with or without the moon, generally speaking, nighttime was not a time that people did their work.

It was too dark. Remember, Jesus said, are there not twelve hours in a day? The night comes when no man can work. He said, we must work while it is day.

That was just an axiom. Everyone knew that. When the night comes, you can't do your work outside anymore.

So I don't think that the moon was there strictly to give light. After all, there are certain times of the month it doesn't give any light. The moon is invisible some nights out of the month.

So what was the purpose of the moon? Well, it may have been really for the purpose, we would say, of governing the tides. It may have done something to help the gravitational balance of the earth or whatever. Maybe, but that's not what Genesis says.

Genesis says that its light was to govern the night. And here's how many Christians have understood this. We know that although the moon's light shines at the night, the moon is not luminous.

The moon does not generate light. The moon is just a rock. It doesn't glow, not on its own.

The sun, on the other hand, does have light. It produces light. It generates light.

And the moon, therefore, is a reflective light, as we all know. And day and night, in later scripture, in the New Testament especially, are often metaphors for the presence or absence of Christ in the world. Jesus said, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Just like the sun. As long as the sun can be seen during the daytime, the sun is the light of the world. Now, Jesus did say to his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, you are the light of the world.

But while he was in the world, he was the light of the world. As long as the sun is seen in the sky, it is daytime. The Bible speaks metaphorically of Christ's presence here as the day of the Lord.

And of his absence as the night. Remember Paul says in Romans chapter 13, he says, the night is far spent, the day is close at hand. He means when Jesus comes back, no doubt.

And when Jesus is here, it's daytime. There was the daytime when he was here before, there will be the daytime when he comes back. In the meantime, it's nighttime.

He's gone. And we, therefore, in his absence, are the light of the world. But we don't have light that we own, that we generate.

We, like the moon, reflect his light. You see, the reason that we can see the moon at night is that even though from the earthly perspective the sun has gone over the horizon and we can't see it anymore, the moon can still see it because the moon is seated in heavenly places. The moon is up in the sky in the realms where the sun itself is, not as far away, but up there where it can still see the sun when we can't.

And it can reflect the sun back to the inhabitants of the earth. And it would seem that God set this system up as a metaphor, as a parable of some sort. Now, when Jesus is here, it's daytime, while he was visible.

When he disappeared from view, when he went back into heaven and disappeared, the world saw him no more. But Jesus said, the world will see me no more than you will see me, in John 14. And so there's a sense in which we do see Jesus in Hebrews chapter 2. It says, we do not yet see all things put under his feet, but we see Jesus.

In Hebrews chapter 12 it says, we run the race with patience, putting aside every weight that hinders us looking unto Jesus. It says in 2 Corinthians 3.18 that we all with unveiled

faces, beholding as an emir the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory in that image. We are beholding his glory.

There is a sense in which we still see him. And because we ourselves are seated in heavenly places in Christ, it says in Ephesians 2.6. So what we see is that, like the moon itself, the moon is not really earthbound. The moon is up there in the sky where the sun is.

So the sun disappears from view from the earth to others, but it's not out of view from the moon. The moon sees it and reflects the light back to the earth. And that is, I believe, an intentional design on God's part to provide that kind of a metaphor.

That while Jesus is away and it's night time for the world, yet there is a light still. It's not as bright. And we do look forward to the day star arising again in our hearts.

It says in 2 Peter 1.9. It says the word of God is a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. There are a number of places that speak about Jesus coming as the day and the day dawning. His first coming was referred to that way in Malachi 4.1 where it says to you who fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

I believe that's referred to Christ's first coming. Many people apply it to the second coming, but I believe I'm not mistaken that even if I am, it remains true that Jesus is the sun and his presence is seen as the sunrise. Likewise in Isaiah 60 at the opening verses.

Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the people and gross darkness the earth. Or vice versa, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people.

But his light shall be seen upon you, it says. His light will arise upon you. And it says the Gentiles will come to the light of your dawning.

There's a dawning that the Old Testament prophets spoke of and I believe actually they were referring to the first coming of Christ. So passages like that are often applied by Christians to the second coming. And of course when Jesus comes back it will be the dawning of another day.

But we are, as it were, ruling the night. Not ruling in the sense that we're ruling the world in a dictatorial or political way. But we are the ones who are here to be given responsibility to enlighten the world while Christ is absent.

Let's look at verse 20. Then God said, this is now the fifth day, Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens. So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded according to their kind.

And every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good, and God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth. So evening and morning were the fifth day.

So now we see the origin of animal life. There are people who try to equate the progress of creation here with the postulated progress of evolution. Those especially who would just make these days either extended long periods of millions of years or else punctuating periods of millions of years.

Individual days of creation or whatever. But you see, no matter how long you make these days, you don't have an agreement in the order of events here with that of evolution. Because the birds appear on the same day as the fish, and yet there are no land animals yet.

Evolutionists believe that birds evolved from dinosaurs, land dinosaurs, reptiles. Which we see that God doesn't seem to classify animals the way that later taxonomy does. Taxonomy is the classification of animals and plants, living things.

And we would classify animals, for example, in groups like mammals and reptiles and fish and amphibians, things like that. Insects, arachnids, and so forth. But the Bible classifies animals by their ecological zones where they live.

All the creatures in the sea. That would include fish, probably reptiles that live in the sea, mammals like fish, like a whale and dolphins that live in the sea. Not really the kind of classifications that we in modern science would use.

Now, this is of course not a defect in the Bible, because who says anyone is obligated to follow the modern classifications? Modern classifications are based upon certain characteristics that animals share, but you could as easily and as justly classify them according to their ecological zones. After all, the birds that fly in the air, in the book of Leviticus when it talks about the clean and unclean birds, bats are mentioned as unclean among the fowls of the air. Well, bats are not birds by our reckoning.

Bats are mammals. But obviously they fly in the air. And actually the word bird here, I read somewhere that the Hebrew word means something like ones that have wings above them or something like that.

So it's not just birds, but flying reptiles as well, like the pterodactyls and so forth. And here of course, what I just said introduces my own understanding of where the dinosaurs come in. People often say, well when were the dinosaurs? Where do they fit into this picture? And I've always thought, well what's the problem with this? Why is that a question? The reason it's a question is because we've been told that dinosaurs lived in a time before modern animals and before man and so forth.

We've been told that they lived and died off in the 70 million years ago or the late

Cretaceous period and so forth. And therefore we've been given the impression that dinosaurs lived a long time before humans appeared here. And so when you read Genesis, you don't read of any long times before humans were here.

You read the creation and then man's here six days later. Well where's the dinosaurs? And that's one of the things that people who have the gap theory try to solve. With the gap, they say well there's this gap between Genesis 1.1 and Genesis 1.2 and during that there's billions of years and maybe dinosaurs lived there.

You know there's actually certain fundamentalist Christians who from time to time Christians can embarrass us with their nonsensical answers but there are a number of Christians who've actually said dinosaurs never lived and that the fossils of dinosaurs that have been found were put there by the devil to deceive us or by God to test our faith. That is obviously a very silly thing to say. And it's so unnecessary to say.

If we ask the question when did the dinosaurs come in, well they came in with the rest of the animals. They were animals weren't they? What did you think they were? Aliens? They weren't plants. They were animal like.

Some dinosaurs lived in the sea. Some lived and flew in the air. Some lived on land.

Well these are different ecological zones and God made all the creatures in each ecological zone in its own time. In the fifth day was when he made those that swim in the sea. It even specifically mentions the great sea creatures, the great sea monsters, I think the King James says.

And that would include of course whales which are huge. Actually the blue whale is bigger than any known dinosaur that ever lived at this point. We don't know of anything that was bigger than a blue whale but whales are still with us.

But there were also plesiosaurs and so forth that were reptiles apparently and swam in the sea and sea going dinosaurs. The word dinosaur, we seem to associate that with an entirely different class of beings than anything today. The word dinosaur literally means terrible lizard.

And it is generally believed that dinosaurs were in fact reptiles. Their skeletal remains indicate that they had the structure of reptiles. There are some scientists today who believe that dinosaurs may not have been exactly like modern reptiles in that they may have been hot blooded.

Whereas modern reptiles are cold blooded. But since we can't exactly stick a thermometer in the fossil and find out what the temperature was of that living creature, it's merely one of the theories that has been popular at various times. But it doesn't matter.

If the dinosaurs were reptiles as has classically been believed, or there's some other kind of creature that we don't have representatives of surviving anymore, they were made in the time that other creatures of their ecological zones were made. And so you have the flying creatures and the swimming creatures. And then in verse 24, then God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind.

And it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Now even the land animals are classified in a way that we would not do so. They are classified not with reference to their physical characteristics as modern taxonomy would, but according to their relationship to man, apparently. The beasts of the earth are contrasted with the cattle.

Now cattle, we think of cows, but in the Bible, often the cattle refers to sheep, herds of sheep, or flocks of sheep, and herds of goats and so forth. Any domesticated animal was cattle. And so cattle refers to those creatures that man domesticates and uses for his purpose.

Beasts then would be the undomesticated wild animals. Things that creep are classified themselves. And they are probably mostly references to reptiles, what we call reptiles and amphibians, and maybe even insects might be called creeping things.

So the things are described, classified in these different ways, these land animals. And of course, again, thinking about the dinosaurs, the dinosaurs that were terrestrial and lived on land would have been created at that time. And it was good.

Now on this matter of dinosaurs, to me it's not that big an issue, but it is to a lot of people. And you may well be familiar with the fact that Job talks, the book of Job talks about some animals, wild animals in Job's day, animals that Job was familiar with. Actually in Job, it's God speaking, God's talking about these animals, and he points out to Job many impressive animals in nature.

The wild horses, the eagles, and certain others that we can easily identify. But among those that he mentions are a couple of animals that we don't know how to identify. One is called Behemoth, and the other is called Leviathan.

And Behemoth apparently lives at the riverside and goes into the water, but apparently lives on land too because it eats up all the grass on a hillside. It's a huge animal apparently. Some of the language might be poetic hyperbole, but nonetheless, even when there is hyperbole, it is there to emphasize, you know, the thing that is being exaggerated.



And to say it eats all the grass on a hillside just means it's got a huge appetite and it can probably denude a meadow. And it says particularly that it moves its tail like a cedar, the Behemoth does. And that has eliminated some of the guesses that people have made about it.

You know, most Bible commentaries are written by commentaries that do not believe in a young earth, do not believe in six-day creation. They believe that evolution has been proven and therefore dinosaurs didn't live alongside man. And so when they find descriptions of these creatures in Job, they assume they are not references to dinosaurs because Job would never have seen a dinosaur, they assume.

And God is obviously describing creatures that Job has seen and that Job's generation knows. It even refers to people trying to hunt them and how that their arrows, when they shoot at it, and this would be against Leviathan rather than Behemoth, that the scales on the belly of Leviathan break arrows against them as if the arrows were dry grass. Now, commentaries have tried to suggest that the Behemoth might be a description of something, a mammoth or an elephant, a hippopotamus, some other very large creature, herbivorous creature, perhaps a rhinoceros, but it doesn't fit because, of course, the reference to the tail.

No one who is describing an elephant or a hippopotamus, and we shouldn't describe it in detail, would mention the tail, that it moves its tail like a cedar tree, more like a snake or something perhaps, but not like a cedar tree. And we don't know of any huge herbivorous creatures that ever lived that had a tail as impressive as that describes, other than creatures that today we would refer to as dinosaurs. And for that reason, many evangelicals do believe that a description is being given of a dinosaur.

That's in Job chapter 40. In Job 41, we have the description of a Leviathan, and that's not a herbivorous creature, it's apparently a carnivorous creature with a large, brimming mouth full of sharp teeth that terrify anyone who sees it. And it's the one that has scales across its belly that'll break arrows like they were dried straw.

Now, some scholars have said that's a description of a crocodile. Certainly the description fits a crocodile more than it fits any other modern animal, but crocodiles don't break spears and arrows against them. Crocodiles are certainly formidable creatures, but their skin's not that hard to pierce with the earthly weapons.

So it would seem that the creatures described are, A, known to Job in his day, and B, probably, if we saw them today, we'd classify them among the dinosaurs, it would seem. The idea that dinosaurs lived alongside man seems to be confirmed. I mean, think about it.

If not, then what, even if we didn't allow that Job was an inspired book, suppose we thought that Job was just written by some ancient people, just a piece of ancient Hebrew

literature, without inspiration. Where did the writer get the idea of these animals and speak of them as if his readers knew of them? It's not like he's trying to put forth some kind of a fiction. All the other animals he names are well known, the eagles and the horse and these various animals, and he says, and behemoth and leviathan, and describes them as if the hunters of Job's day were quite familiar with these creatures and terrified of them.

Obviously, until we discover some other living species that might fit the descriptions, the best theories of these people were quite acquainted with dinosaurs, and that they existed. Now, of course, the question of where dinosaurs went since then is one of those things that makes people, some people think that's a challenge to the idea that dinosaurs were created. But that's not, there's many, many species of animals, dinosaurs and otherwise, birds, mammals, reptiles, that have become extinct.

Many of them in modern times. The California condor almost went extinct recently. It was only because of human efforts to preserve it and to reintroduce it, but that it did not go extinct.

Many, many species of animals throughout history have had their time and then they've gone extinct. It would appear that dinosaurs are among them, although some people feel there might even be a few specimens living somewhere today where man does not go. I'm not going to argue that that's the case, but we don't know that it isn't.

All we can say is if the dinosaurs indeed are completely gone, they are not unique in that respect, because many species of animals in modern times have gone extinct. Over a million species of creatures are known to have lived that are no longer on the planet. As far as when the dinosaurs went extinct, we don't know, but one theory that makes a decent amount of sense, since we know that dinosaurs once covered the earth, is that they may have died off shortly after the flood.

If they were living still at the time of Noah, then, and it seems they probably were, if Job knew of them at a later date, then Noah would have taken specimens on the ark. However, after the flood, when most of them were wiped out, there would be very few specimens left. And if they became a nuisance to humanity, which one might think they would, then they might well have been hunted down and wiped out within a few generations after the flood.

Who knows? I don't know, but it would explain how a species that once covered the entire planet, apparently, was quickly reduced to nothing. The flood would have a good way of decimating the population in general. Actually, decimating is not the right word for it.

Eliminating the population in general, except for whatever specimens were on the ark. You mean to tell me that Noah took these giant dinosaurs on the ark? Well, some of

them might have been extinct before the flood, and then he wouldn't have taken them. But if he did take dinosaurs on the ark, no doubt he'd take young specimens.

A hatchling brontosaurus would not be all that big, not much bigger than certain animals we have today that Noah took. So all of this sounds extremely silly to people who are not exactly convinced that the Bible is telling true history here. And those who are more convinced and more impressed than they should be with the claims of modern evolutionary science, which are, frankly, not as well substantiated as they would have you to believe.

So we have the land animals made on the sixth day, and then in verse 26, the most important act, so important, in fact, that another chapter is given to unpacking it. It's covered over rather quickly in Genesis 1, and that's the creation of man and woman. In Genesis 1, 26, it says, Then God said, Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them.

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. 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 yields seed.

To you it shall be for food, also to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to every thing that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food. And it was so. Then God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good.

So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Now, we see that God frequently is said to have reviewed the acts he did on a given day, and concluded that what he had done was good. That's repeated in many of the days, not all of them, but most of the days.

It says God saw the so-and-so that he had made, and that it was good. Here, at the end, it says he saw all that he had made, and it was very good. Apparently, for emphasis, it was excellent.

It was far better than anything had been prior to that. Everything was good in its own way, but, in its own sequence, but the whole thing was complete, and that was a very good thing. Now, the creation of man and woman, I think, is what made it very good.

And we often think of man and woman today, the human race, as that which has corrupted, polluted, you know, destroyed the earth. And, in some measure, that is, of course, true, and that is as a result of the fall. But when God made the original pair, they were good.

They were very good. They were not destructive. They were not sinful.

Now, some people say, well, did God make them perfect? And if they were perfect, why did they sin? How could a perfect person rebel against God? It's not quite correct to say that they were perfect. The Bible doesn't use that term. It's more correct to say they were innocent.

A little child is innocent, but a little child is not perfect. Perfect would suggest maturity, completeness, you know, no room for improvement at all. And yet, I think God made Adam and Eve childlike.

They were adult-like in their bodies, but they were like children in their, you know, awareness, in their consciousness, I think. And, no doubt, he intended for them to spend an eternity, which they would have lived if they had not sinned, learning and being fascinated and growing in their knowledge of God and of the things he created. Of course, that was all interrupted by the fall.

But they were innocent, but they weren't perfect. They had not sinned until they did sin. And in that time, they had an unbroken fellowship with each other and with God.

Now, it says here that God deliberated within himself. In verse 26, he said, Let us make man in our image. Now, all the other times you said, God said, Let there be this.

God said, Let there be that. We don't read of God having forethought, although he certainly must have. But we don't read about his deliberations in any of the prior things that he created.

Here we read, he took counsel within himself, apparently. He said, Let us make man in our own image. And, obviously, people always wonder, why do you say us? Who's he talking to? Is he talking to the angels? Well, probably not, although it's likely the angels existed with him at this time.

And it's even possible to say that we were made in the image of both God and angels, assuming angels look something like us. But the angels didn't have a role in creating us. And God says, Let us make.

He's talking about creating a new species. The angels did not have any role in that. And he would not have invited them to participate in that role.

Otherwise, the worship of angels would be legitimate, because they'd be our creators.

And we're forbidden to worship angels. You know what the rabbis say about this? When God said, Let us make man in our image, the rabbis say he was talking to the animals.

And they presume that evolution is true, so that they would suggest that our bodies evolved from animals. The animal world created us, in a sense, in its image. And God added his image when he breathed into us the breath of life, so that we're kind of a combination of animal and divine nature.

And that's a rather interesting, but unnecessary postulate. Calvin believed, and I only mention him because he's a famous theologian of some credibility among many people. Calvin believed, and so do many other Christians, that this plurality of Let Us Make Man was simply a literary plural of majesty, as he would put it.

God is only one God, but he's more than an individual person. And so there's this majesticness of speaking about us, and one speaking about oneself. Actually, some of the kings and queens of England, as I recall, have spoken of themselves in the plural, you know.

We have decided, in fact, journalists do that. It's a journalistic we, in some cases, you know. I even do that on the radio, inadvertently.

I'll say, why don't you call and talk to us, or we appreciate the support you send, or something like that. Well, who's we? It's just me. There's no one there but me.

It's journalistic. But Calvin thought it was a plural of majesty, and of course many Christians would prefer the suggestion that it's a reference to the Trinity. After all, we've already encountered a plurality in the word Elohim, and yet, strangely, linked with singular verbs.

And so it's not a new thing to introduce a plurality in speaking of God. It's just the first time that a pronoun has been used in the plural. And it's not the only time we'll find it, either.

Later on in chapter 11, in the story of the Tower of Babel, God says to himself, let us go down and see this thing that they're making. It's either, in all likelihood, it's either a Trinitarian kind of way of revealing God as a plural and singular individual, or else it's simply a literary device, and as I said, a plural of majesty. We'll not bother ourselves much more with it, since we can't really decide between those two with certainty.

You may favor, in your own mind, one or the other explanation. Now, it says that man and woman were made in God's likeness. God says, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.

Now, humanity bears a likeness to God, but obviously some unlikeness, because there's nothing like God, really. You know, and when the Israelites came out of Egypt, in Exodus

chapter 15, they sang and celebrated and said, who is like thee, O Lord, among gods? Who is like thee? There's no one like you, God. But we're kind of like God.

In some respects, we're like God, in other respects, we're not like him at all. We're not invisible. We're not omnipresent.

And Adam and Eve, even before they fell, were not omnipresent. They weren't omniscient. They weren't omnipotent.

God has certain incommunicable traits that make him God. And mankind has never been God, in that sense, and never had been like God in sharing those traits, nor will we, as far as I know. But the sense in which man is like God has been, again, a matter of speculation.

Some people think that God looks something like us, and therefore we were made to look like him. However, it says male and female. So does he look male and female? I don't really think that our physicality, our physical appearance, is that which resembles God.

Although you might say, well, when people have seen visions of God, they saw one that looked like a man. Well, true, and when they saw angels, they looked like men, too. But in all likelihood, that was an accommodation on the part of God.

God is a spirit. God does not have a physical body, as far as we know. And because of that, what does a spirit look like? I don't know if a spirit really has a distinct appearance such as we could describe.

Who knows? But God can certainly appear in any form he wants to. A burning bush, a pillar of clouds, a pillar of fire, a human form. God can appear any way he wants to.

But I don't think that our physical appearance resembles a visual, a visible appearance of God, because God is invisible, for one thing. And therefore, the likeness of God in humanity is generally understood to be one of the mental powers that people have. We are rational beings.

We can reason things out, like God. We can make decisions, like God does. The term free will is not found in the scripture, but certainly that people make decisions and have a will, and sometimes make the wrong decisions, when God would prefer that they made the right decisions, indicates that we have a certain liberty of will.

We have a moral sense. We have creativity. As I mentioned in an earlier lecture, animals are not creative, even though some animals perform great feats of engineering, like the spider, the spiderweb, and other creatures, the beaver and its dams, and birds and their nests, and so forth.

They are great feats of engineering, but they're not feats of creativity. These creatures did not come up with the design on their own, like man comes up with a design for a machine, or a building, or a work of art, or a play, or a book, or a composition of music. Mankind creates things, in some senses, as it were, out of nothing.

We don't create buildings out of nothing, or machines out of nothing, but we create music, and stories, and stuff just out of our heads. And I think it's these intellectual, and perhaps emotional, and volitional, and creative factors that set man apart from other animals that also is the shared characteristics we have with God. And, of course, we could say we share another thing with God that the animals do not, and that is spirituality.

That we have, in addition to our biological existence, we have spirits, something of God's. Spirit was breathed into Adam. We read later, in chapter 2, that God breathed into man the breath of life.

The word breath and spirit are the same in the Hebrew, and therefore man became a living soul after spirit, or God's breath was blown into him. That's a mysterious thing, but of course we see in human beings, even non-Christian human beings, spirituality. And that spirituality in places where God is not known, it takes strange directions.

People think there's spirits in the rocks, or in the trees, or they revere nature, or they revere their ancestors, or whatever, who are long dead. Obviously, there's a sense of the spiritual, rather than just the physical that people have, which we have no reason to believe the animals have any such awareness. These are probably the things that we could say represent the image of God that he put into humanity, that we're not in the other animals.

Now, it says in verse 26, that God gave man, or chose to give man, dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and all that. It says in James chapter 3, that every manner of beast, and a bird, and a fish have been tamed by mankind. Though it goes on to say, though no man can tame the tongue, it's an unruly evil full of deadly poison, but mankind has tamed all kinds of creatures.

And no creature has ever tamed man. Some animals have eaten men, but none have ever tamed men. None have ever domesticated men.

You don't find apes domesticating men. You don't find wolves raising babies, except in legends. You don't find anywhere that animals really have dominion over man.

Power, yes. Some animals are bigger and stronger, and can catch us by surprise, and can kill us. But apart from just brute force, animals have no power over man.

Whereas man has been able to take every species of creature almost, well at least every category. We haven't tamed all species, but even the zebra, which they say cannot be

tamed, has been harnessed, and you can, you know, they can be controlled. Man controls and tames animals.

That is because God has given mankind special prerogatives that he did not give to the animals, and that is dominion over all the creatures. And the fear of man is in the creatures, until they are domesticated. And a wild horse, which is as wild as any other wild animal, can be broken by the efforts of man, and be made a willing and powerful servant of man.

So can most other animals. That is the dominion that God has given humans over the other animals. You don't find other animals doing that with other animals.

Now it's true that ants sometimes are seen to herd aphids. That's an interesting parallel to humans herding cattle. And the ants actually milk the aphids.

That's why they herd them. But they don't domesticate them. And the ants, by the way, don't know what they're doing.

They don't know what they're doing when they're herding aphids any more than they know what they're doing when they're building their colonies. This is all instinctive. But mankind deliberately sets out to tame animals and control animals and so forth.

And no animal does the reverse back toward man or even toward other animals, really. Now we can see then that God's purpose in making man, and by man we're talking about humanity here. The word man functions both, obviously, as a reference to the race of humanity and also to the gender, the male gender.

But God made mankind with the mind of sharing what God already had, and that is dominion over the creation. And I often think of this as being similar to the motivation of a man who starts a business or a farm and he has children and he gives it over to them to run. There's some delight that a father or a mother has in seeing the child come up and take over the family business, as it were.

I think every man in ministry would have no greater delight than to see his sons and daughters grow up to be in the ministry. And ideally to take over the ministry. It must be a great honor and delight to Billy Graham to see his son Franklin has come around and has now kind of moved into his father's shoes.

That's just kind of a parental instinct that we have, and no doubt that too is part of the image of God. God apparently has that parental instinct and wanted to have children to whom he could delegate and even give over the whole family business. He created a beautiful, wonderful, perfect world and said, now I need someone to give it to.

Now I need someone to run this for me. And so he said, let's make man, someone a lot like me, someone a lot like us, he says, who can run this for us, who can have dominion



over this, who can rule this thing for us. And so God did that.

And verse 27 importantly says, God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. Now this male and female is passed over rather quickly here for the purpose of keeping the symmetry of the chapter.

The chapter's symmetry is seen in that each day is briefly treated and closes with similar words and so forth. There's not a great deal of detail given to it here, but it is too important to leave unexpounded. And that is why chapter 2 verse 4 will begin another account of the creation, not conflicting, but focused on one important thing, and that is the creation of man and woman.

It's passed over rather quickly here, and of course the question arises the way verse 27 is worded, does this mean that man and woman both are equally in the image of God? And it would seem like that is yes, the answer is yes. And again that would be another reason to suggest that the image of God is not in terms of visible appearance, because men and women, although we clearly appear to be the same species by sight, we can tell, we're all human, but we don't look alike. We have different body shapes, we have different, I mean there's differences about us.

It's not the physical image of God that we bear. It is, as I say, the rational and the moral and the volitional and the creative characteristics that God has and that he's given to us, and men and women both share that. Now, some people say, well, you need both man and woman to demonstrate the full character or the full nature of God.

That's probably true, but I don't even know if man and woman combined fully depict the full nature of God. But God does have characteristics of both, and while it's very obvious that God is always referred to by the masculine pronoun, yet there are characteristics of God that are feminine-like. As when it says in Isaiah, can a mother forget her nursing child or fail to have compassion on it? Lo, she may forget, but I will not, God says.

I have a mother's heart, even more than a mother's heart toward you. On the other hand, we know that God has a father's heart. Now, we should not think of God as being really of any gender, because genders are determined by biology and by anatomy.

You know when a baby's born, if it's a male or a female, before it speaks a word, and it won't speak a word for quite a while, but you know instantly by its anatomy. And there is a difference between males and females in anatomy and in biology, and no doubt in psychological orientation too, because obviously men and women have different strengths in general, in the areas of personality and character and so forth, and aptitudes. But God doesn't have biology, and therefore he's neither male or female.

I'm sure that the finest traits of men and women are reflections of corresponding traits in God, dim reflections no doubt, but God is not male, but certainly there's a reason for

calling him by a masculine pronoun throughout Scripture. He's always referred to as a king, not a queen, a father, not a mother. You know, the imagery that is used of God is masculine imagery.

That's not because God is intrinsically male, but because the images that are used, the relationship God bears to his people, is like that of a king, or like that of a father. And that does differ somewhat from the relationship of people to their mother, and that the relationship that God is trying to illustrate by these human metaphors is, you know, the masculine parent is really pretty much what God identifies himself with in terms of his relationship with us, though he's got a mother's heart as well, I'm sure. And this is not in any sense compromising anything about God to say that.

We're not trying to move into a gender neutral way of speaking about God or Jesus or anything like that. It's simply that God doesn't have a gender, but the analogies and metaphors that he uses, which are intended to teach us about the kind of relationship he has with us, are often those, generally those of the masculine parent, the masculine ruler, whatever. Because the masculine parent, the masculine ruler have typically been the sovereign in the family or in the country in most cases.

Makes the best comparison. So, we see that God made them and gave them command to fill the earth, and he gave them every plant, and he gave all the animals every plant to eat too. Now I guess there were some plants that are now toxic that were not toxic then, and there were animals that are now carnivorous that were not carnivorous then.

We don't read of any sanction upon humans eating animal food, that is, flesh, until after we have the flood, when God specifically in Genesis chapter 9 tells him, now you shall eat every living creature even as every green plant. So God extends man's diet later after the flood, but at the beginning God intended man to apparently eat only plants, and animals only ate plants. Now someone's going to say, well, but aren't certain animals kind of designed to eat meat? Well, that could get us into a long discussion where we don't have full... There are creatures whose teeth and perhaps digestive systems appear to have been created from the beginning to digest and eat meat, although it's not always clear.

We would certainly say that's true of a dog. We think of it as a meat-eater, but dogs eat other food too, though. There's not anything, they're omnivorous.

The mammal, the land mammal that has the largest number of sharp teeth in the world is the possum. Opossum. We say possum.

But the opossum has 50 carnivorous-looking teeth in its head, and no other land mammal has as many. And yet the possum is omnivorous. It just as soon eats persimmons as any kind of meat, but its teeth are versatile.

And no doubt, creatures that God made with these versatile teeth eventually expanded their diet to include meat, but initially they ate only plant life. The panda, which you would think looks like a carnivore, but it only eats bamboo shoots. And so we can't be quite sure that just because an animal is now known to be a carnivore and looks like it's designed for that, that it was originally designed to be carnivorous.

Hard to say. There's also another consideration, and that is that animals that now hunt and eat animal food might have been designed to be carrion eaters, that is to eat dead animal food. Now of course this raises the question of whether God intended for animals to die before the fall.

And I think he did. Now I realize people think, oh, death wasn't until the fall. True, the fall happened rather early.

I don't know if anything ever died before then. And it does say that death entered the world through Adam, but it's speaking specifically of human death because it says as death came through one man, so resurrection of the dead comes through one man. It's obviously talking about human experience.

Humans died because of sin. Humans will be resurrected because of Christ. But what about animals? It is not my understanding that God made animals immortal.

Humans even were not immortal except potentially. If they ate of the tree of life, they would live forever. But they were only potentially immortal, apparently, because he said if you eat of this other tree, you'll die.

And so God didn't even make humans intrinsically immortal, but only potentially immortal. If they eat of the right tree and not the wrong tree, they'll live forever. The animals, perhaps, were not even ever given that option of being immortal.

They are animals. And therefore, there's a good reason to believe that God never intended for animals to live forever, that they would live a lifespan, they would reproduce, then they'd die. Imagine if mice never died.

Imagine if cockroaches never died. Or flies. I mean, I really don't believe that was in the perfect plan of God to have immortal house flies.

And so in my opinion, even if animals were not originally made to eat other animals that were living, it may be that someone had to clean up the corpses. Maybe the hyenas were made to eat meat, but not living meat. I don't know.

I'm only floating ideas that strike me as worthy of some consideration only. We're going to stop there, and we'll come back and talk about the Sabbath at the beginning of the next hour. Or maybe we'll talk about it after we talk about the spiritual implications of Genesis 1, because that would perhaps be the better place to stick that in there.

So let's take a break for about 15 minutes, and we'll come back to Genesis.