

## Biblical Theology, Lesson 2

### Creation, Part 1: God and God's People

*Read Gen. 1:26-31*

Last week, we saw that the Bible tells one great story, and that the center and hero of the story is God, most fully revealed and accomplished in the person, life, and work of Jesus Christ. I said that we could outline the storyline of the Bible as: *Creation, Fall, Redemption, New Creation/Restoration*. Today, let's start at the beginning - the very beginning, with Creation. And, of course, the beginning of the story starts with God. There is one God who created all things. God has no beginning; everything else does. This is absolutely essential for understanding the story of the Bible, the story of the World, and the story of everything else, including ourselves.

#### I. Creator God - Gen. 1

##### A. The One Creator God (Gen. 1:1-2)

- There is only one God, and He has no beginning - He has always existed.
- Everything else that exists came into being through Him. He is our beginning and the author of all Creation. In *Gen. 1:3-31*, God speaks all things into existence. He created everything above the Earth - the sky and heavens, the Sun, all the stars, planets, and moons (*1:3-8*) - "the first day". Everything that exists in the universe was created by God. Even the angels and spiritual beings were created by God. [Creator-Creature Relationship]
- He created the Earth, all creatures, all plants and animals (*1:9-25*) - Days 2-6.

B. All things were created good - at the end of each "day," God "saw" that what He created was "good." Creation, nature, and the world are not inherently bad; God created all things to be good, for our good and for His own glory. *1:31* - "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was good."

#### II. God's People - humanity

- Mankind created to know, serve, enjoy, and glorify God;

##### A. Created in God's image

- a. God creates us in His image - *1:26-27*.
- b. Every person is made in God's image - Inherent dignity and value of each and every single person because we are all made in the image of God, no matter our

ethnicity, intellectual capabilities, socio-economic status, gender, or even whether we have been born yet.

c. Definition of being *made in the image of God*:

What exactly does it mean to be created in God's image? After all, Genesis 1 mentions this, but never defines it. But I think the reason why Moses didn't have to define what he meant by being made in the "image of God" is because such a phrase and concept would have been very familiar and obvious to his original audience. This language of a god having an image-bearer was language used in the Ancient Near East to refer to *something* or *someone* representing that god. For example, the people might build a large statue that represented the god (an idol of a false, pagan god). Think, for example, of a large statue of Zeus in an ancient Greek Temple. That statue was supposed to reflect, resemble, and represent the god, imaging the god who reigned over this territory (or so they would claim).

Similarly, the king himself of many of these ancient, pagan kingdoms was seen as a living image of a god - a living representative of that god. The idea was that the king was seen as representing a particular god and exercising that god's power and rule over a particular people and territory. Because of this, some kings in the ancient Near East were called "sons" of god. That is, there was a relationship between the king and the god. The king was called the god's "son" because he was in the likeness of his god, reflected the god's behavior, and represented the god's rule. So, for example, think of ancient Egypt: the king of Egypt was called the son of the god of Egypt and was the living image of the god of Egypt. And, as the god's son, he was to bear the god's image as he resembled, reflected, and represented the god in his rule over the land of Egypt.

As a good summary, Peter Gentry writes, "In the ancient Near East, since the king is the living statue of the god, he represents the god on earth. He makes the power of the god a present reality. To sum up, the term "image of god" in the culture and language of the ancient Near East in the fifteenth century B.C. would have communicated two main ideas: (1) rulership and (2) sonship. The king is the image of god because he has a relationship to the deity as the son of god and a relationship to the world as ruler for the god."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 192.

1. Rulership - “have dominion” (v.26, 28) - little kings, ruling over creation

Mankind is set over all of the rest that God made on the Earth. Being made “in God’s image” means that Mankind was supposed to be God’s representative over Creation, being like Him, being in communion with Him, and exercising dominion under God and over Creation.

2. Sonship - dynasty; God’s people - God’s family. Created to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it” (v.28)

This is why another aspect of being made in the image of God is *being made male and female*

#### B. Male and Female

1. God created humanity to be male and female. Both men and women are made in God’s image, but that does not mean we are the same in every way. We have equal value, dignity, and importance. But we also have different and complimentary roles - biologically, the way we’re wired, and also in life, the home, and the church. The world sees these different roles as oppressive toward women, but God gave them to us for our good.
2. God created us male and female. This idea is under attack in our culture today, but at the beginning of the Bible, God tells us that “male” and “female” aren’t categories we came up with ourselves, but were created by Him and are inherently good. God also created marriage. It was God’s good design, even before the Fall, that human beings would be born male and female, and that we would get married, have children within the context of marriage and the family, and “fill the earth.” This is why manhood, womanhood, marriage, and children still exist today as God’s good gifts to us. This is why Christians believe that we do not get to redefine gender, sexuality, marriage, or the family. God created them. GOD created them, and they are very good gifts - but only when we understand and use them in the way God designed them. God created each of us to be either male or female - no other options, and we don’t get to change that. GOD created marriage to be between one man and one wife - no other options. He intends for sexuality and reproduction to be expressed within marriage.
3. And this isn’t arbitrary. Being male and female is part of what it means to be made in the image of God. Our maleness and femaleness represents and pictures God. THis isn’t a peripheral part of Christianity that we can take or leave; this isn’t an arbitrary or

negotiable matter that we can differ on - our maleness and femaleness, our gender, marriage, and sexuality - they *reflect and image God*; our being made in the image of GOD includes being *male and female*.

4. Part of how this works is revealed in the institution of marriage. Marriage is a lifelong union of one man and one woman (Matthew 19:1-5). Our love for one another reflects GOD, who is love - a community of love, among the Trinity, and also His love for us and Creation. It is a picture of Christ's relationship to the church, where the husband represents Christ, and the wife represents the church (Eph. 5:29-32). The relationship between a husband and wife is a big deal to GOD, because it was designed to be a beautiful demonstration of the union between Christ and his people.
5. Our *maleness and femaleness*, and the institution of marriage God created, are meant to represent our covenantal relationship with God and our union with Him as GOD's people. It is not an accident, then, that marriage is given to us in Gen. 2, right after we see God creating humanity to be His people. Marriage is immediately given as a picture, an illustration, of what is going on here between humanity in GOD. And right before the first marriage, we see God establish his relationship with humanity through the giving of a covenant.