

Genesis 1:24-31 "How God Made the World: Day 6"*

Proposition: God accomplished two amazing events on Day Six, according to Genesis 1:24-31.

I. On Day Six, God created the animals (24-25).

A. First, God said what He would do (24).

B. Then God did it (25).

1. He made wild animals.

2. He made domesticated animals.

3. He made ground creatures.

II. Next on Day Six, God created man (26-31).

A. First, God said what He would do (26).

1. We learn that God exists in plurality.

2. We learn that God imaged Himself in man.

3. We learn that God delegated the rule of His world to man.

B. Then God did it (27-30).

1. Man received a God-given pattern (27).

2. Man received a God-given purpose (28).

3. Man received a God-given provision (29-30).

Implications: What is true of God's world (31)?

1. It is *God's* world.

2. It was a *good* world.

3. It is now a *groaning* world.

4. It will once again be a *glorious* world.

Years ago the psalmist praised God with this expression, "I praise you because I am *fearfully and wonderfully made* (in Psalm 139:14)."

The body is amazing to ponder. The average human body is about 65% water. Twenty percent of the weight of the typical adult is from his bones. If you are an adult of average weight, here is what you accomplish in 24 yours:

⊢ your heart beats 103,689 times

⊢ your blood travels 168,000,000 miles

⊢ you breathe 23,040 times

⊢ you inhale 438 cubic feet of air

⊢ you eat 3.25 pounds of food

⊢ you drink 2.9 quarts of liquids

⊢ you lose 7/8 pounds of waste

⊢ you speak 4,800 words, including some unnecessary ones

- ↳ you move 750 muscles
- ↳ your nails grow .000046 inch
- ↳ your hair grows .01714 inch
- ↳ you exercise 7,000,000 brain cells

Yes, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." Even Einstein once said that "one who cannot stand rapt in awe is as good as dead."

But we can become enthralled with the marvels of the human body and miss the point. The psalmist exclaimed, "We are fearfully and wonderfully *made*."

We are not here by chance. We don't just *happen* to be here. We have been *made*--which implies there is a *Maker*. God created us.

How did He do it? How did the Creator fashion mankind? And why? We need not wonder for God Himself answers those questions for us in His Word.

We've come to message #4 in our series, "*In the Beginning, God*," an expositional study of Genesis 1-11. Here's what we've seen so far.

In the beginning there was God. Before space and time, there was nothing outside of God. Until God created. According to Genesis 1:1-2 here's what happened in the beginning of time--God created the heavens and the earth.

God did it in stages. He took six days to fashion His universe. When the earth first came from the hand of God, it was *tohu* and *bohu* ("formless" and "empty," verse 2). And so on Days 1, 2, & 3, God removed the "formlessness" by creating a series of boundaries; and on Days 4, 5, & 6 God eliminated the "emptiness" by filling the world with inhabitants. On Day 3 He created the vegetable kingdom, and on Day 5 He made the sea creatures and winged creatures.

But the climax came on Day 6 as we'll see today. What happened on Day 6? God accomplished two amazing events on Day Six, according to Genesis 1:24-31.

I. On Day Six, God created the animals (24-25).

The pattern for God's creative work of the animals follows the pattern He utilized on each of the five previous days. First...

A. First, God said what He would do (24). "And God said." The same as before--we're about to see creation by the speech of God. Remember, Moses is the human author of Genesis, and his people in 1400 B.C. wrestled with a similar problem we face in 2000 A.D. *In a world full of words, whose word matters most?* Moses makes it clear we'd better pay attention to the One who is so powerful that He created this universe *by His Word*.

Here's what God said (24), "'Let the land produce living creatures [Hebrew, *nephesh chaim*--"living soul"] according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.' And it was so."

Here we discover an insight as to *how* God performed His creative work. The text states, "Let the *land produce* [KJV, "Let the earth bring forth"] living creatures."

Commentator G. Aalders offers this perspective, "There is an indication here that the bodies of the animals were formed out of materials that were present in the earth. This is in agreement with the entire presentation

in the creation narrative. The substance, the materials of heaven and earth, were created in the beginning. All the further creative acts in the six days of creation consisted of forming and organizing the world into its completed form out of the materials created at the outset."

Yes, God created the animals, but apparently He used material He created on Day 1 to accomplish His work. Lest that surprise you, answer this. How did God make Adam? He used "the dust of the ground (2:7)." And how did He make Eve? Again, by using existing material, in this case a rib from Adam (2:22).

So in the creation of the animal kingdom, first, God said what He would do. Then...

B. Then God did it (25). "God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good."

Moses mentions three categories of animals here (interestingly the order is changed from their listing in verse 24):

1. *He made wild animals ("the beast of the earth" in the KJV).* Actually the term "wild" does not appear in the Hebrew. When we think of "wild" animals we may think of carnivorous beasts of prey, but that's not the meaning of the language (in fact, we're specifically told the animals were vegetarian at this point, not carnivorous 1:30). The Hebrew actually says, "Those living on the earth (Aalders, 68)." It seems to be a reference to the animals that roam in the wide open fields.

2. *He made domesticated animals.* It's translated "the livestock," in the NIV, and "cattle" in the KJV. The word seems to refer to domestic creatures.

3. *He made ground creatures.* Or "creeping thing" as the KJV puts it. It's a reference to creatures that move along the ground, or "ground movers."

It's true that Moses was a prophet, not a scientist. His aim wasn't to give us precise, biology-textbook categories. Yet his threefold division of the animal kingdom is nonetheless quite remarkable. When God created the animals, He made small creatures, domesticated animals, and what we would call "game."

Notice the repetition of the phrase "according to their kinds." Five times in two verses God's Word states that God made the various types of animals according to specified, clearly distinct *kinds*.

That tells us a couple of important things. One, God loves variety. And two, there is not a "great chain of life," in which all creatures are inter-related, as the theory of evolution suggests. Scientist and author, Henry Morris, writes, "Undoubtedly, the genetic system of each 'kind' was sufficiently complex to permit the later development of many variations within it, but the basic 'kind' was fixed by God in the creation."

What was God's assessment of the animal kingdom? According to verse 25, "God saw that it was good."

And now the world is ready for the climax of God's work. The world now has form. It has a vegetable base for food and a perfect climate conducive for growth. The sea creatures and winged creatures and land creatures are all in place. And it's all good.

But it's not complete, not yet. Here comes the culmination, the second amazing event God accomplished on Day 6. First, God created the animals...

II. Next on Day Six, God created man (26-31).

Again, the pattern is repeated...

A. First, God said what He would do (26). "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"

We've come to an amazing moment, the origin of *man*. I use the term *man* as the Hebrew text uses it here, in a generic sense. God said, "Let us make *man*...and let *them* rule." Man, thus, here refers to both male and female.

Certainly this passage teaches us some amazing things about the human race, but first and foremost it teaches us *about God*. What do we learn about God from verse 26? Three insights...

1. *We learn that God exists in plurality.* Notice the break in the narrative flow. Up until now the narration has gone like this, "And God said, 'Let there be (3)'...And God said, 'Let there be (6)'...And God said, 'Let the water be gathered (9)'...And God said, 'Let the land produce (11).'" And so on.

But the pattern breaks in verse 26, and for the first time in Genesis 1 we discover that God exists in plurality, "Then God said, 'Let *us* make man in *our* image.'"

Who is *us* in this verse? Moses doesn't explain. Does he assume we should know? Does Moses himself fully know? Remember, in verse 26 Moses is simply recording what *God* said. So just who is the *us* that created man?

We find similar words in Genesis 3:22 (following Adam's sin), "And the LORD God said, 'The man has now become like one of *us*, knowing good and evil.'"

Similar language appears in Genesis 11:7 (on the occasion when God saw the post-flood world building the tower of Babel), "Come, let *us* go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

Centuries later the prophet Isaiah had an encounter with the living God, and recorded a statement he heard the Lord make (Isa 6:8), "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for *us*?'"

So who is the *us* in Genesis 1? Bible scholars are divided. Some suggest that God took counsel with the angels. That's highly suspect since nowhere else in the Bible does it say that man was created in the image of angels. Others suggest what we have is the "plural of majesty or honor." Another variation suggests it's "the plural of fullness."

I believe the *us* indicates the *plurality* of God. God is *one* God, without question. Yet He exists as *three* Persons--God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is a Triune God, a truth given in seed form here and developed more fully throughout the rest of the Bible (in texts like John 1:1-5; 10:27-29; Col 1:15-20). Interestingly, the ancient church fathers considered "us" to be a reference to the Trinity. Now a second insight...

2. *We learn that God imaged Himself in man.* "Let us make man *in our image, in our likeness.*" The terms "image" and "likeness" are basically synonymous (in the Hebrew the endings actually rhyme). Luther translated the phrase, "an image which is like Us."

Look at a quarter and what do you see? The likeness of George Washington. The coin has been stamped with the image of our first president.

God imaged Himself when He created man. The word "image" (*tsalam*) occurs 17 times in the Old Testament, ten of which refer to various types of physical image (such as pictures of men in Ezek 16:17, models of tumors in 1 Sam 6:5, and even idols in Num 33:52).

Don't misunderstand. God is God, and man is man. God is infinite, and man is finite. God is Creator, and man is the creature. Man does not have infinite worth, only God does. Nor does man possess divine attributes--no matter what new-age teachers claim. There is an infinite difference between God and man. God is in a class all by Himself.

Yet God imaged Himself in man. What does that mean? G. Aalders offers this helpful explanation (p. 71), "'Image' implies that there is the same similarity between the human person and the person of God as there is between a person and a picture of that person. The word 'likeness' strengthens this by giving the impression that the resemblance is exact."

That doesn't mean that there's not a profound difference between the infinite God and finite man. There is. But the focus of this text is on the similarity rather than the difference. Insight #3...

3. *We learn that God delegated the rule of His world to man.* In verse 26 God states, "And let them rule." Rule over what? The fish, the birds, the livestock, over all the earth, and over the ground creatures.

Did God need help? Is that why He delegated the care of this world to man? No. But in His wisdom He designed a caretaker, someone like Him--at least as much like Him as is possible for a finite creature. And then He gave this creature called "man" dominion over the rest of the created order.

Realize this. A correct anthropology begins with God, not man--with what *God* says, not what man thinks. Right here is the reason our society is in moral shambles, isn't it?

The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, used to love to take long walks in the summer evening, meditating and thinking. On one occasion he was seated in a park when a suspicious policeman noticed that he had been there for several hours. The policeman came up to him and said, "What are you doing?" The philosopher replied, "I'm thinking."

The policeman said, "Who are you?" Kant said, "That's precisely the problem I've been thinking about. 'Who am I?'"

The fact is this. We'll never find the answer to that question if we're not willing to go back to Genesis. My friend, if you want to know who you are and why you are here, you must look to God's Word. For it's here that we hear the words of the Creator.

On Day Six, God said what He would do--that's verse 26. Then...

B. Then God did it (27-30). Verse 27, "So God created man." This is critical. Our society today is floundering in a sea of despair. We've digested a couple of generations of evolutionary teaching, and bought the notion that man is nothing more than a highly developed animal. We're supposed to be a "civilized" nation, yet ponder the statistics:

- In our own nation alone two to four million women are battered each year.
- 1.8 million elderly are victims of maltreatment.
- 1.7 million children are abused each year.....1500 of them die from this abuse.
- 30,000 children die world wide because they don't have enough food to eat.

And perhaps the greatest indication of the devaluing of human life is the fact that the evil of abortion continues. A generation has passed since the first wave of unborn children fell and the accumulation of each year's toll totals nearly 37 million. Their names would fill the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial wall over 700 times. And 97% of those 37 million lives were ended simply because they were an inconvenience to their parents.

We need to go back to Genesis. What is true of *human life*? We learn three critical lessons about man in verses 27-30.

1. *Man received a God-given pattern (27)*. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

In many ways verse 27 is one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible. It's actually poetry, the first verse of poetry in the Old Testament--which is about forty percent poetry and sixty percent prose.

In the poetic structure of verse 27, Moses used three parallel statements to depict man's God-given pattern. In each of the statements the verb "created" (Hebrew, *bara*) is repeated. There is to be no question as to why man is here. He was *created* by God.

Answer this. What makes man different from the animals? Here's the answer. *Image*. God used a pattern when He made us, and the pattern was Himself.

God *speaks*. What's true of man? God created him with the capacity to speak.

God is an *intellectual and volitional* being. What's true of man? God gave him intellect and volition--the ability to make choices.

And God is a *relational* being--though He's one God, He exists in relationship as three persons. What's true of man? God created man to be a relational creature.

Notice that God made two sexes--male and female. Remember, the three Hebrew phrases in verse 27 are parallel. Part of what it means for man to be God's image-bearer involves a distinction of the sexes.

You see, God designed humans to be communal creatures, and the basic building block of community is the marriage relationship. But what God creates Satan seeks to corrupt. Isn't that what we see happening all around us?

What is homosexuality called? An *alternate* lifestyle. Alternate to what? It's alternate to, indeed, rival to the one God established.

Let this sink in. We have been created in the image of God. That means that abortion, euthanasia, and homosexuality are not merely societal problems. They are an affront to God Himself.

Suppose I opened up my wallet and gave you a picture of one of my daughters. How would I respond if you took that picture and tore it in pieces? I would be upset, but why? It's not the Kodak paper and the ink--they're worth less than a dollar. It's what that picture represents, right? That picture is the image of my daughter.

Dear friend, that unborn child is created in the image of God. To terminate his or her life is to eliminate a person that God created to reflect Him. Do you see?

2. *Man received a God-given purpose (28)*. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

One of golf's immortal moments came when a Scotchman demonstrated the new game to President Ulysses Grant. Carefully placing the ball on the tee, he took a mighty swing. The club hit the turf and scattered dirt all over the President's beard and surrounding vicinity, while the ball placidly waited on the tee. Again the Scotchman swung, and again he missed. Our President waited patiently through six tries and then quietly

stated, "There seems to be a fair amount of exercise in the game, but I fail to see the purpose of the ball."

Answer this. *Why* are we here? We have a God-given purpose. What is it? God created mankind and then gave him two instructions. One, procreate--"be fruitful and increase in number." God wanted Adam and Eve to produce other image-bearers.

And what were they to do? The second instruction--*rule over* the world. That has to do with gaining mastery over it and its secrets, and is certainly doesn't condone exploiting or polluting it.

The Lord created mankind to be the steward of creation. Man is to rule the world in God's behalf. He is God's representative, and is to treat the world as God Himself would.

What's true of man? First, man received a God-given pattern, and second, a God-given purpose.

3. *Man received a God-given provision (29-30)*. "Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food.' And it was so."

It's a fact that in God's world, living creatures need food to survive. God is so good. He knows what we need. He gave the first man and woman a provision of food. They were to eat from the seed bearing plants and fruit bearing trees.

Don't miss that. In the first world, mankind was vegetarian. And according to verse 30, so was the animal kingdom. Adam ate plant life. So did the animals. At creation God intended for the vegetable kingdom to be the food source for man and animals.

I can hear the objection, "Oh, that can't be! That would never work!"

But here's our problem. We assume that the present balance of nature has always existed. Yet it hasn't. And it won't. In the Millennial Kingdom the animals that are now hostile will live together peaceably.

The modernist says, "The present processes have always been in existence." Not so according to the Bible.

What was the first world like? As we saw in weeks one and two, that pre-sin world was very different from our world. In what ways? 1) There was a water canopy above the firmament (2:7). In our world today there is no such thing, and hasn't been since Noah's flood. 2) The water canopy provided the world with a warm climate, resulting from the greenhouse effect. There were no icy, polar caps, as we have today. 3) The earth was covered with rich, luxurious vegetable life which God designed to be the food source for man and animals. 4) There was no death amongst man and animals. Again, the skeptic cries, "Impossible! If the fox didn't kill the rabbits, the life-cycle would get out of whack." But that assumes the present processes were in effect in the first world, doesn't it? Were they? The skeptic can't prove they *were*, nor can I prove they *weren't*. But God says they weren't, and He was there. He created that world.

Now let's talk about the implications of what happened on Day 6. Let's ask the question...

Implications: What is true of God's world (31)?

Notice the biblical conclusion given in verse 31, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day." God's Word beckons us to consider four implications about God's world.

1. *It is **God's** world*. "God saw all that *He* had made." The song-writer is right, "This *is* my Father's world."

Know this. Fulfillment in life comes only when we do what we were created to do.

I have a hammer in my toolbox. A hammer is a great tool for driving nails. But it's a lousy tool for cutting finish trim. Why is that? Because a hammer wasn't designed for cutting.

Listen. There are a lot of people in this world who feel empty and unfulfilled--and you may be one. If you are, ask yourself two questions. First, for whom are you living? You were created to live for God. But are you? And the second question, are you doing what God wants you to do with your life? You see, this is *God's* world.

2. *It was a **good** world.* When God finished His work on Day 6 He stepped back, assessed what He had done and said, "Very good!" Indeed, it was a good world.

That's right, *was*. What about now? What's true of the world in the present? In our world diseases like cancer ravage bodies. In our world tornadoes demolish towns. In our world, babies are born with defects. In our world, families disintegrate. In our world, death is the norm. In Romans 8 terminology, creation is *groaning* (see Rom 8:18-22).

Yes, it's God's world. And yes, it was a good world. But...

3. *It is now a **groaning** world.* Do you hear it? G.K. Chesterton (who was a kind of 19th-century C.S. Lewis) once said, "What ever else is true of man, it is certainly true that man is not what he was meant to be."

Why not? The answer, in short, is this. *Genesis* 3. Our forefather, Adam, sinned against God and brought us under the just, curse of God.

Did man cease to be God's imagebearer after the Fall? No. Even after the Fall man is still declared to be God's image (Gen 9:6). But though the image of God has not been eliminated, it has been severely marred.

Is there hope? Yes! How do we experience that hope? Through faith in Jesus Christ. Colossians 3:10 says a person can be "renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." How? Through Christ.

What's true of Jesus Christ? According to Colossians 1:15, "He is the *image* of the invisible God." And Hebrews 1:3 declares, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being."

Did you catch that? Jesus Christ is the perfect image-bearer of God. The first Adam brought the curse, but Christ, the last Adam came to earth to reverse the curse. Why did Jesus die on a cross, and why did He rise again? To remove the curse.

Are you tired of groaning under the curse of sin? Then repent of your sin, place your trust in Jesus Christ, and He will set you free! It's true.

And know this. Yes, this world is now a groaning world, but take heart...

4. *It will once again be a **glorious** world.* When Christ returns.