

(Genesis) Genesis 1:26-31

by J. Vernon McGee

God creates man in his own image, giving him dominion over the earth and the power of free will, but also calls him to fill the earth and take care of it.

Duration: 18:25

Scripture: Genesis 1:31, Psalm 19:1, Proverbs 14:1, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Genesis"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the law of recurrence or recapitulation in the preaching of the word of God. He explains that this law involves stating important facts and truths in a concise manner. The preacher uses examples from the Bible, such as the six days of creation and the book of Deuteronomy, to illustrate this law. He emphasizes that God is mentioned 32 times in the creation account and highlights the significance of God creating man in His own image. The sermon also touches on the principles of order, progress, promptness, and perfection found in the creation narrative.

Transcript

And now we come to the creation of man on the sixth day. And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Now we have this tremendous statement, and something that we all ought to be interested in, and this is the creation of man.

And the question arises, how is man created? Well, the next chapter will tell us that. We'll go into detail, as that chapter does, when we get there, and I trust we'll be there today. Now, God created man in his own image.

In the image of God, created he him, male and female, created he them. Now you have here just the simple fact of the creation of man. And this is the third time the word bara, which means to create out of nothing.

You see, man here is created. He's something new, if you please. It's the same word that occurred in the first verse of Genesis.

God created the physical universe. Then he created life, and that's in verse 21. God created great whales and every living creature, and so on.

Now God has created man. Verse 27, so God created man in his own image. In the image of God, created he him, male and female, created he them.

Now the detail of this will be given in the next chapter. And frankly, we can see from this that God has left out a great deal about the creation of the universe. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, and that's all you have, friends.

And that's all that God has given to us about the creation. And that's about all we can know about it. Now he could have filled in detail, but in the second chapter, he's going to fill in detail about just one act of his creation, and that's man.

And you know why? Because this is written to man. And God wants him to know about his origin. And it's as it were, God is saying that I would like very much for you to pay attention to your own creation and not be speculating about the creation of the universe.

But we're going to see something that's quite, I think, tremendous when we come to the creation of man. And here we're told God gave him dominion over the earth. And I do not think, as we shall see, that that means God made him a sort of a glorified gardener for the Garden of Eden.

This man had tremendous authority given to him. And we are going to find out a little later that God says to him that he's to do certain things relative to this creation that God has given to him. I want to submit to you that this is one of the great statements of the Word of God.

And I can't conceive of anything quite as wonderful as this. We have here now the creation of man. And man is created in the image of God.

How does that mean? Well, may I say to you that man is like God, I think, is a trinity. Now, I know immediately someone is going to say, Oh, I know what you mean. You mean that man is physically and mentally and spiritually a being.

Well, that, I think, is true. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians, the 5th chapter, that very thing, that God preserve you wholly in your body and in your mind and in your spirit. I think that's true, but we'll see when we get into the next section, that is the 2nd chapter, that actually it means more than that.

I think that the fact that man is a personality, and as a personality he is self-conscious, and then he is one who makes his own decisions. He's a free moral agent. Now, that is the thing that is unique, apparently, about mankind.

And I think that's what it means here, when God created man in his own image. Now, let's move on down from that, because I'm very anxious to come to all of this when we get into the 2nd chapter here. Now, we're told that God created man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him, male and female, created he them.

But you see, the 1st chapter doesn't give you the details of how man was created and how woman was created. We won't find that until we come now to the 2nd chapter. And that's the reason that I say that God didn't intend to give us the details concerning the creation of this great universe that we are in.

Or we would have had another chapter here relative to it. But he offers no explanation for that other than he is the Creator. And that again, friends, puts us right back upon this all-important truth that you have in the 11th chapter of Hebrews.

By faith we understand that the worlds were created by the Word of God, so that things which are seen today, they were made out of things which did not even exist before. It's creation ex nihilo, creation out of nothing. And somebody says, explain that.

My friend, I can explain it. And do you know the very interesting thing is, evolution doesn't explain that. Evolution has never answered the question of how nothing becomes something.

Now, they've always got to start with a little amoeba. And as we've seen, some of them even start with a garbage can. Some start with a piece of seaweed.

And some start with an animal up a tree. May I say to you, you've got to have something to start with. But the Bible starts with nothing.

God created. And that is the tremendous thing that is revealed in this statement here, and we'll move into details in the next chapter. Now, we are told, And God blessed them.

And God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. Now, these are the things that God said to them to do, that they were to be fruitful, and multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. I'd like to look at this for just a moment, because I feel like that we've now come to something which is really pay dirt, if you please.

We now see here that God has given to this creature some unusual things. He says to him first, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And we're going to have him repeat that when he creates woman, and we find that God seems to be the one that introduced the subject of sex, by the way.

It's quite interesting that this generation thinks they've made a new discovery. You get the impression today from the way that this thing has become a hang-up for this generation, that sex is something that this generation is the Columbus, and it's discovered it. May I say to you, God mentions it here at the very beginning.

In fact, there are four ways that God has of getting creatures into this universe. One was by direct creation, that was Adam. The second one was by indirect creation, and that happened to be Eve.

And third is by natural generation, that which is pretty well known today. We're certainly dragging it down to a level that God never intended it should be dragged down to. May I say to you that God created man to reproduce.

And it's a wonderful, glorious truth. And it's not to be taken today and be made a dirty, filthy, slimy thing that man right now is making of it in the books that he's writing. And he's writing nothing in the world but dirty, filthy books, producing nothing in the world but dirty, filthy things.

And the reason is not because of art. And right now some of the critics are speaking out, and thank the Lord for that, that they're not doing it because it's art. Because it's not art, it's obscene, it's revolting and repulsive.

And I'm merely now quoting some of the critics. They're doing it for the almighty dollar. And this is the thing that is back of it.

But it's a lovely, wonderful thing as we're going to see here. Now, God created this man in his image. God is the essentially personal being.

And in giving the man an immortal soul, he gave him also a true personality. And he has a self-consciousness. And he has a power of free choice.

And he has a distinct moral responsibility. He's in the image of God. Now, will you notice something? God told him to fill the earth.

That's reproduction. And now he says to him, replenish. And that's an interesting word.

That would seem to indicate that this earth had been inhabited before by other creatures. And God says, replenish the earth. Because whatever the other creatures were, they'd been destroyed.

They had disappeared. Now he says, subdue the earth. And I think that that's the basis of learning and scientific exploration today.

You remember Proverbs says in Proverbs 25, 2, it's the glory of God to conceal a matter. But it is also the glory of kings to search it out. God hides diamonds way down in the earth.

And God also puts the treasures down where man has to dig for them. And I very frankly believe that today you find that same thing true about knowledge. I think it's true about the study of the Word of God.

Let me give you this verbatim. It's Proverbs 25, 2. It's the glory of God to conceal a thing. But the honor of kings is to search out a matter.

God wants you to go into the laboratory and pour it into the test tube, look at it under the microscope, my beloved. But unfortunately man comes out with an atom bomb and he's trying to destroy the human family today. Now he says that man's to have dominion over the earth.

He's not just a gardener to cut the grass. Man was to rule this earth. I think when Adam wanted rain, he just brought the cloud over and had a shower just like you turn on the sprinkler in your yard.

And I think that when he wanted the sun to shine during the day, that it would shine. If he didn't want it, it didn't. He ruled this earth.

I think that you see that in the Lord Jesus. He had control over nature when he was here on this earth. He could say to the storm, be still.

He could feed a multitude. I think Adam could have done all of that until he fell. He lost that dominion, you see.

Now verse 29, And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed. To you it shall be for me. Now I assume from that statement that man was a vegetarian at first and it's not until after the flood man became a meat-eater, by the way.

And now I read verse 30, And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is life, I have given thee 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.

Now this brings us to the end of chapter 1, and it might be well to just make a resume at this point. What are some of the things that you note here? Well, there are several things that I think that we should note, and one is the fact that God is mentioned here 32 times, and the Bible makes no attempt to prove that there is a God. Why? Because he says, The fool hath said in his heart there is no God, and that the Bible is a book written to reveal the spiritual, the religious, the redemptive truth, and that comes to us only by faith.

And so we have here the fact that God is the one who creates, and there are three specific things that are mentioned in this chapter. Then you have here, in this first chapter, a unity and the power and the personality of God, and that's exactly what Paul says in Romans. He says that the invisible things of God are seen.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen. How are they clearly seen? Being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. And I say to you very candidly that God has shut you up to faith in himself.

Now, we find out that Genesis 1 does something else. It denies polytheism, one God creates. It denies the eternity of matter.

It's in the beginning. It all had a beginning, my friend. And you must remember that there was a time that science taught the eternity of matter.

And Genesis 1 denies pantheism. God is before all things, and he's apart from them. And it denies fatalism.

God acts in freedom of his will. Then there's some striking features in this chapter. Let me enumerate them.

There is, first of all, order. There is progress. There is promptness.

There is perfection. And then we are going to find now in chapter 2, Adam's placed in the garden under conditions, and then we'll have the Sabbath day call to our attention. Now we come to chapter 2. And in chapter 2, there is a great principle that is revealed here, a principle of revelation.

And, of course, this is the first time it occurs, but you will have it again and again. It's part of inspiration. It's the fingerprints of inspiration.

It's the law of recurrence or the law of recapitulation. In other words, the Spirit of God in giving the Word of God has a practice of stating, not a detailed or elaborate way, but a series of great facts and truths. We've had six days of creation.

Now to come back and take out of that that which is all important and elucidate and enlarge upon that particular thing. That's what we're going to have now in chapter 2. That's what Deuteronomy is. Deuteronomy is the interpretation of the law after the experience of 40 years with it in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy is not just a repetition of the law, but rather an interpretation of it. You find four Gospels. You find again and again that this procedure is followed and we'll notice as we go through the Word of God.

Now that which is lifted out, that which pertains to man.

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