

Our focal verses cover the creation of mankind and help us to understand God's original intention for mankind. All of the sin and evil we see in the world today is due to man's rebellion against God's original purposes for creating mankind.

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

God began the sixth day of creation by creating the animals and other creatures that live on land (vs. 24-25) and recognizing that their creation was good. He then proceeds to create human beings.

“And God said, Let us” – Who is “us?” Not the angelic host since God would not put angels into the same category as Himself with the characteristics of being “in our image, after our likeness.” Scripture never describes man as being created in the image of heavenly beings but in the image of God. When God says “Let Us” it is another indication of the Trinity as God is speaking within the Trinity. Recall from v. 1 that the Hebrew word for “God” is plural.

“make man in our image [shadow; resemblance], after our likeness [similar in appearance]” – The Hebrew word for “image” doesn't necessarily mean an exact representation of the original, but merely something that resembles or represents it. The Hebrew word for “likeness” indicates something similar in appearance. Does this mean that God looks like us, with arms, legs, and face like we have? Not likely since Jesus said “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24). God created man in His image and likeness in the sense that, unlike the animal kingdom, we have intelligence, moral (knowing right from wrong), emotional and spiritual understanding similar to God. He also gave us authority over all living creatures on the earth, as the next line describes. Gen. 2:7 reveals other similarities to Himself that God gave to man.

“and let them have dominion [rule; subdue]...” – God is an authoritative being and He has granted man authority over the living creatures on the earth. With that authority comes the responsibility to care for these creatures and not to abuse them. Fallen man has this authority but redeemed man will be given more authority in the kingdom and throughout eternity.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him” – God carried through with His plan of creating man in His own image to be similar to Him, not physically, but in other characteristics. These characteristics set us apart from the animal kingdom, making man's life precious because He was created in the image of God. **Gen. 9:6** “*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*” Killing an animal does not warrant the death penalty but killing a human being does because of the defilement of the image of God.

“male and female created he them” – God created distinct genders and with rare exception every person is born with one. We do not have the freedom to choose our gender or to fabricate other genders from our imagination. To do so is to rebel against God's creative plan.

Verses 28-31: God blesses the human couple He has created and instructs them to fill the earth with offspring and to exercise dominion over all other living creatures on the earth. He gave the herbs and the fruit of trees for food to not only humans but also to the living creatures of the earth. Thus He ended the sixth day of creation and when He looked back at all the things He had made, He saw that it was very good.

Genesis 2

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them” – This is a remark summarizing the previous chapter speaking of the completion of the heavens and the earth and everything within them (plants, animal, people, stars, planets, etc.).

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made” – God only used six days to create everything.

“and he rested [cease; stop] on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” – God stopped creating on the seventh day, not because He was tired, but because He was done. He had accomplished all that He intended to do. In **Psa. 8:3**, the psalmist is speaking of the glory of God revealed in His creation when he says “*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained...*” God doesn't literally have fingers, but the statement illustrates that the creation of the universe and all things within it is something that God could do with His “fingers” and not something that would exhaust Him.

“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified [to set apart; consecrated] it” – Another reason God rested on the seventh day is to set the precedent of the sabbath. **Ex. 20:8-11** “⁸ Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰ But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

“because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” – Man is to follow the example that God set of working six days and resting on the seventh, which was done to benefit man. Jesus said in **Mark 2:27** “*And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.*” Hebrews 4 also talks of the sabbath being a foreshadowing of the rest that we will have in Christ in the future kingdom when we cease from the labors of this life and rest in the redemption we have in Christ (**Heb. 4:9-10** “⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. ¹⁰ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”).

⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The remainder of this chapter expands on the statement made in Gen 1:27 summarizing the creation of man.

“And the LORD God formed man” – God creates man in His likeness by making him a triune being like Himself. We find here the three components of man that Paul mentions in his prayer for the Thessalonians in **1 Th. 5:23**: *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

“of the dust of the ground” – God used the dust of the ground to form man’s physical body. When we die, our bodies decompose back into the materials from which we were created. **Gen. 3:19** *“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”*

“and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” – Scientists say that we are nothing but a couple of dollars worth of chemicals, and without the breath of life that’s all we are worth. Both the Greek and Hebrew words for “spirit” have to do with air, wind or breathing. Here God breathes life into a lifeless pile of dirt in the shape of a man to give it life.

“and man became a living soul” – Once God breathed the breath of life into man, the lifeless pile of dirt became a living being. It was not evolution’s random chance that gave man life but the intentional hand of God that formed him and breathed life into him and caused him to become a living creature, made in the image of God.

⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

After creating the man, God prepared a place for him to live – a garden called Eden. We don’t know where Eden was, although we have clues in the text. Moses writes that it was “eastward,” perhaps meaning that it was somewhere east of where he was when writing Genesis. Verses 10-14 mention four rivers that split off from a river flowing through the garden. Likely the topography has changed since the flood, so these landmarks are of limited use. God plants “every tree” to provide man with food and beauty (man was not deprived), but he also puts two other trees there: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life reappears in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:2) and seems to be a source of eternal life.

¹⁵ And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷ But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

God places the man in the garden and gives him the responsibility of caring for the garden. He also gives only one restriction: Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil under the penalty of death. Apparently the tree of life was not off limits and the intention was for man to live eternally on earth with the garden as the starting place.

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

God recognizes that man by himself is incomplete. He needs a companion that can complete him in a reproductive sense as well as an emotional and intellectual sense. The Hebrew word for “meet” means “in front of.” You could read that as an equal that Adam could be with face-to-face, or figuratively, a counterpart. Adam needed someone that could be a companion to him that could help him be all God created him to be and nothing in the animal kingdom could fulfill that need. Verses 19-20 confirm that no animal could be an appropriate companion for Adam.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²² And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³ And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

We see the first surgical procedure performed on man as God removed a rib from Adam. While the procedure was similar to how surgeries are done today, this one was supernatural and no doubt left no scar or post-surgical discomfort. God then used the rib to form a woman and brought her to Adam. Just as Adam had named the animals (v. 19-20), he now names his new companion. Adam recognizes that the woman was not made independently of him like the animals, but was made from himself so he could establish a connection with her. It has been said that woman was “not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.” (Matthew Henry)

²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The narrative explains how that the creation of woman as a companion for man is the basis for marriage. Man and Woman were originally one flesh and in marriage the two come together to become one. While he is never to stop honoring his parents, the bond with his wife is to be stronger and have priority. The Hebrew word for “cleave” means “to cling; to stay with; to be joined together.” God intends marriage to be a permanent, life-long bond between a man and a woman. Notice Jesus’ quotation and comment on this verse: ⁴ *And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,* ⁵ *And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?* ⁶ *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”* (Matt. 19:4-6)