
Lesson 6 — ADAM



“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

[Genesis 1:27]

After God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them, He decided to give special attention to the “crowning glory” of His creation — man. The Hebrew word for man is *adam*. Although this Hebrew word can refer to mankind in general, the Genesis account clearly describes the creation of an individual named Adam on Day 6.

The collective testimony of the Biblical authors overwhelmingly affirms that Adam not only was a real, living, breathing, historical person but also that he was the first man created by God “*at the beginning of creation*” and the progenitor of the entire human race.

The unique distinction that God placed on Adam that set him apart both ontologically (*being*) and existentially (*purpose*) from the rest of creation is what theologians call the *imago dei* — or image of God. Many have debated exactly what is meant by this phrase. The word image can refer to form, so in one respect Adam was meant to represent the invisible God in physical form. Image can also mean likeness, so in another respect Adam shared some of the same characteristics and attributes with His Creator.

1. ***The Image of God as Reflection*** — sharing both physical and spiritual properties and characteristics with God.
 2. ***The Image of God as Counterpart*** — sharing in unique relationship and fellowship with God.
 3. ***The Image of God as Divine Authority*** — sharing in rule and dominion with God over the earth.
 4. ***The Image of God as Representation*** — representing God on earth as living imagers of the divine nature and administrators of the divine will.
- ❖ Read Genesis 1:26-31 and Psalm 8. How would you best try to describe the concept of the image of God? Which of the options above best communicate the *imago dei*? Why?

A Living Being

The genealogy of Jesus in the gospel of Luke is traced all the way back to Adam, who is called the “*son of God*” [Luke 3:38]. The special attention the LORD gives to the creation of Adam speaks to the unique relationship and purpose the Creator desires for mankind. After creating Adam the LORD placed him in the Garden, invited him into a cooperative partnership and gave him creative freedom to tend and expand God’s domain.

- ❖ Read Genesis 2:7. What is unique about the way the LORD created Adam compared to the other creatures? How do you envision Adam’s original physical & spiritual condition?
- ❖ Read Genesis 2:15-20. What was Adam immediately tasked to do? What does that say about Adam’s primary role as God’s imager on earth?
- ❖ What was the one thing incomplete in God’s original creation, according to Genesis 2:18-20? How should we understand the phrase “suitable helper?”

Sex, Marriage & the Created Order

It may come as a surprise to some, but sex is God’s idea. Sexuality is one of the most beautiful and powerful gifts from the Creator when enjoyed and expressed within the parameters of God’s design and purpose. As Jesus reminds us, God made man both male and female at the very beginning of creation [Mark 10:6], and by doing so, He established the created order as one of the essential laws of nature. It should come as no surprise that God’s exclusive purpose for sexuality emerges in the first few chapters of Genesis.

We can observe the expression of the created order in how virtually every living organism has been designed by God to procreate and perpetuate life through sexual reproduction. Gender, or sexuality, is inherent to man’s identity and to God’s original plan to “*be fruitful and multiply*” in the context of faithful marriage.

God established marriage as the foundation of the family, where one man and one woman are joined together for life. Any and every sexual expression or act outside the context of marriage is in direct violation of the created order and an offense to God. Sexual immorality in its various perverted forms has always been one of the greatest detriments to the family

and society as a whole. The family is the fabric of human civilization and the initial institution established by God. Before God established government or the church, He created the family to be the primary context to experience divine love and relationship.

- ❖ Read Genesis 2:20-25. What is being described in this passage? What is conveyed by Adam naming the woman [*also see Genesis 3:20*]? What is the significance of woman being formed from man's side?

- ❖ From a purely biological perspective, gender is both binary (only two sexes) and immutable (can't change), which is what we discover in God's word. How then should we view and understand the current cultural affirmation of gender identity disorder and transgenderism?

Two Creation Accounts?

Some interpreters have proposed that the first two chapters of Genesis describe two separate creation accounts. After reading the clear chronology of Genesis 1, the details in Genesis 2 seem to present some apparent contradictions. For example...

1. In Genesis 1, God makes the plants and trees and all vegetation on Day 3, the fish and birds on Day 5, and the land animals and man on Day 6.
2. In Genesis 2, God creates man out of ground (Genesis 2:7) and then God makes trees, plants, vegetation (Genesis 2:9), birds and animals **AFTER** the creation of Adam (Genesis 2:18-20).
3. So the question is ... Did God create the trees and birds and land animals before or after the creation of Adam?

There are at least two satisfactory explanations for these apparent discrepancies.

First, Genesis 2 must be understood as an up-close, detailed account of the 6th Day of creation, especially in regard to God's unique work in the Garden of Eden. What the Bible describes in Genesis 2, therefore, is not contradictory to what God had already done on Days 3-6, but rather complimentary.

Perhaps after Adam was created on Day 6, God put finishing touches on the Garden by forming every tree that is "*pleasant to the sight and good for food,*" along with the tree of

life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These trees and vegetation apparently were unique as being good for food and especially beautiful as the backdrop to the Garden.

The same can be said about the birds and land animals. Perhaps the LORD gave Adam special privilege of being an eyewitness to His creation in the Garden. In other words, God could have formed one of each kind of animal exclusively in Adam's presence for a special purpose. As God created, Adam was tasked with naming the animals, which signified his authority over them.

But there is also another, much simpler, explanation involving the Hebrew language.

Many translations, like the King James Version, render the Hebrew verb to form — *yatsar* — in the simple past tense, which creates the chronological confusion of Day 6. *"And out of the ground **the LORD God formed** every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam..."* But other translations, such as the NIV and ESV, have a subtly different rendition, by emphasizing the verb *yatsar* as, ***had formed***, implying completion of action. In other words, God didn't create these animals after Adam, but simply brought to Adam the animals He had already created. Problem solved.

Q & A

- ❖ Try to list some of the attributes man shares with God? What are some of God's attributes that are not shared with man?

- ❖ What connections do you see between God's original mandate in Genesis 1:28 and the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20?

- ❖ Read 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:22-33. How does Paul connect the created order established in Genesis with the roles in family and the church?

- ❖ Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. How does Peter explain the created order in the context of marriage?

- ❖ Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. How is Jesus able to change our relationship to Adam?