

What Kind Of Man Indeed
Genesis 1:24-27

An atheist was walking through the woods one day admiring all the “accidents” that evolution had made. “What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!” he said to himself. As he was walking alongside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. Turning to look, he saw a huge grizzly bear charging towards him. He began to run as fast as he could up the path. Looking over his shoulder he saw the bear was closing. Somehow he ran faster, but looking back again the bear was still gaining ground. So he ran even faster. His heart was pounding and his lungs burning. All of a sudden he tripped and fell to the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up, but the bear was right over him with its paw raised to strike him.

At that moment the atheist cried, “Oh God help!” Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent. Even the river stopped moving. A bright light shone on the man and a voice spoke. “You deny My existence for all these years, teach others I don’t exist, and even credit creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect Me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?”

The atheist looked directly into the light and said, “I would feel like a hypocrite to become a Christian after all these years, but perhaps you could make the bear a Christian?”
“Very well,” said the voice.

The light went out. The river ran. The sounds of the forest resumed. Then the bear dropped his right paw, brought both paws together, bowed his head, and spoke: “Lord, for this food which I am about to receive, I am truly thankful.”

We come to the final day of the creation week. Each day God was creating something that would prepare for His crowning achievement, the pinnacle of His creative work. On this day He would create

man. From this point on the rest of the Bible is about an unfolding relationship God would have with man.

Each day of the creative week we see God speaking and bringing into existence something from nothing, something that had never existed before. The Bible gives us God’s formula in His creative process. It’s really quite simple and straightforward when you think about. “And God said...and it was so.” He spoke and it happened just as He said. Something different never appeared from what He commanded to come forth.

On day one God said let there be light and there it was.

On day two God said let there be an expanse or a sky to separate the waters below that covered the surface of the earth with the waters above that formed a vapor around the earth.

On day three God said the waters on the earth should all be gathered together in one place to form the seas and let land appear. He spoke again on that day and brought forth vegetation: the kinds of plants and trees that fill our fields and forests.

We noticed that the word kind is very broad in its meaning. Within that word is the idea of variation but also limitation and specification. God established parameters so that one kind will not “evolve” into something else.

Take for example ice cream. That’s a very broad term. If you walk into a Baskin and Robin’s ice cream parlor and ask for some ice cream, the person behind the counter will ask you what flavor. Ice cream is the kind and the flavor is the variation within the kind.

God created kinds of plants and trees on day three.

On day four God said there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day and night and to be signs

for seasons and days and years. These lights were created to give light to the earth. The greater light was created to rule the day and the lesser light for the night. We know them as the sun and moon. He also made the stars. We are not to worship them, but we read in Psalms 19:1 that they worship the Creator.

On day five God said the waters were to teem with living creatures and birds were to fill the sky above the earth. These He blessed and instructed to reproduce after their kind.

We noticed last week three important principles about God's creation.

The day of God in creation was exact.

The design of God in creation was exceptional.

The delight of God in creation was expressive.

A day was a day, 24 hours in length. It was not some imprecise or vague estimation of time in millions of years that allowed for the advancement of mutations within a living thing evolving into something different. "And God said...and it was so." And the evening and the morning were a day.

Let me remind you of the words of Martin Luther, that great reformer when he wrote: "If you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are. For you are to deal with Scripture in such a way that you bear in mind that God Himself says what is written. But since God is speaking, it is not fitting for you wantonly (haphazardly, needlessly) to turn His Word in the direction you wish to go."

In our passage this morning we come to the last day of God's creative week. Each day God has brought into existence everything necessary for what will be His final and most creative act – the creation of man. Turn with me in your Bibles to Genesis 1:24-27 and let's consider first the final day of creation.

I. THE FINAL DAY OF CREATION – vs. 24-26a

Here on the concluding day God is going to populate the land with living creatures. Again you will notice that they are according to their kind. We have said all along that on each day God has established distinctions.

There was the distinction on day one between light and darkness which resulted in the distinction between day and night.

There was the distinction on day two between the waters below and the waters above that was separated by sky.

There was the distinction on day three between land and sea and between the kinds of vegetation – plants and trees.

There was the distinction on day four between the greater and lesser lights that provided a further distinction between the seasons, days, and years.

There was the distinction on day five between creatures in the sea and those in the air. As on day three, there was a further distinction given to them to reproduce after their kind.

Now we come to day six. There us yet again a distinction made between the animals God created. They are broken into three categories and are to reproduce after their kind. The word kind means the same thing here as it did on days three and five. It's a generic word that encompasses the varieties within each kind. So we have the dog kind which includes the variety of breeds.

We have the cat kind which includes everything from the little fur ball that sheds all over your house and knocks ornaments off your Christmas tree to the large cats like lions and tigers and mountain lions.

There is the ape kind.

There is the horse kind that includes the zebra and donkey. You can breed within a kind, but you can't breed outside that kind.

For example here is a zorse which is a cross between a horse and a zebra. How about a zonkey? It's a cross between a donkey and zebra.

You won't find a cross between a chimp and a donkey or a lion and an elephant.

It is according to their kinds.

God created three categories of animals.

The first are cattle as stated in the KJV or livestock in the NIV. That is the better understanding of the word. It's referring to all kinds of livestock, not just cattle in particular.

The second category is creeping animals or creatures that move along the ground. This would include such things as insects, smaller reptiles (larger ones would be included among the beasts), amphibians and so on.

The Law of Moses identified many of these creatures that were not to be eaten because they were considered unclean. Leviticus 11:29-31 refers to some creeping creatures like weasels, rats, lizards and geckos.

The third category was beasts and included the large, wild animals. We might consider many of the large animals found in Africa like the big game – elephants, water buffalo, lions and so forth.

In our country we think of bear, deer, elk, moose, and mountain lions.

It would certainly have included dinosaurs and yes I believe they were created on day 6 not millions of years earlier, becoming extinct due to an ice age or their elimination by a huge meteorite that slammed into the earth.

When we read that the land was to produce or bring forth these creatures the term means "made of the same compound material" as the earth. At death they would return to the same material as the earth. The word used in the Hebrew that they were "living" is the same word translated soul. But their soul is different than man's because their soul is not eternal. The evolutionist and atheist would argue that because man is just an animal his soul ceases to exist at the time of death as well.

As we saw in each of the preceding days, God saw that what He had made was good. He couldn't have done any better and He wouldn't have done anything differently.

But there is one more thing we see at the beginning of verse 26 that is part of the sixth day of creation, it is not just a part of it, it is the pinnacle, the capstone, the finale. "Then God said, 'let us make man...'"

Here on the final day of creation we get the first look at man.

II. THE FIRST LOOK AT MAN – vs. 26-27

It is this passage that we see why man is set apart as different from the rest of creation.

In a B.C. comic strip an ant is talking. He says "Thank You for Your creation, providence, and grace. And thank You for watching over my family."

Another ant joins him and says "Who you talking to, Jake."

The first ant says "God."

The second ant says "You're kidding."

The first ant says "Don't you ever talk to God?"

The second says "I don't believe in God."

The first ant says "Who do you think made you?"

The second ant says "Queen Ida."

The first ant says "He made her too!"

The second says "Yeah, yeah, yeah – with all due respect, Jake, I'm mad at Your God! He doesn't even exist!"

The first ant says "Have you ever even tried to talk to Him?"

The second ant says "How do you talk to someone you're made at?"

The first ant says "How can you be mad at someone who doesn't even exist?"

The evolutionist believes we are just a product of chance that occurred millions of years ago when

conditions were just right and a zap of lighting kicked origins into gear with a single celled amoeba.

The 1968 movie 2001: A Space Odyssey had a variation to that. The opening of the movie has a couple of groups of monkeys vying for the same water hole. Overlooking the squall is a large black monolith. It's from an alien civilization. It sends out some signal to the leader monkey of the one group that gives him the capacity of reason, they take a step forward in evolution. The next scene is modern time and here man is.

Evolutionists would have us believe that we are just a product of chance, the composite of dust from exploding stars.

There's a lot of interest these days in looking up your DNA to see what your heritage is. A couple weeks ago, Jim Neigh sent me this cartoon.

(Cartoon)

This video I showed a few years ago is fitting for our discussion today and the prevailing thought in classrooms around the country.

(Video)

Some people don't share my same enjoyment of the Muppets. I watched the Muppet show back in the day on TV and went and saw the two most recent movies. One of them has two brothers named Gary and Walter. Gary is human and Walter, well Walter is a Muppet. They grow up as best friends. They're planning a trip to LA to see the Muppet studio. When they find out that the Muppet studio is going to be destroyed they go into action to get the Muppets together and save it all. During the movie they begin to question their identity. Gary wonders if he's a man or a Muppet and Walter wonders if he's a Muppet or a man. They look into a mirror and see their reflections and begin to sing "Am I a Muppet? If I'm a Muppet then I'm a manly, manly Muppet. If I'm a man then I'm a Muppet of a man.

And there is one line in there that is important "I look into these eyes and I don't recognize the one I see inside. It's time to decide."

We are living in an unprecedented day of gender confusion. Evolution is the culprit. Perhaps the best example is Olympic star Bruce Jenner who a couple years ago went through what they call gender reassignment. There have been lots of others like Chaz Bono and Chelsea Manning. You can change the outside of the package, but the inside is still the same. You can't alter the DNA. The code is written and that's who you are because Scripture is clear.

Let's notice three things about man's creation. The first is that man's creation was divine.

A. Man's Creation Was Divine – v. 26a

"And God said 'Let Us make man in Our image.'"

Notice that the shift is from God speaking in the first person to the third person. Some scholars believe God is talking to the angels.

Other scholars believe God is talking to the other created things.

Neither of these is accurate.

There is a discussion within the Godhead, whether just to the Spirit who was hovering over the earth back in verse 2 or if it also includes Christ who was involved in creation as well (John 1:3). God is in discussion with The divine counsel.

The creation of man was at the direction and guidance of God. God made it happen. Two passages come to mind that clearly point to God as divine Creator of man.

Exodus 4:10-12

Psalms 139:13-16

Last Sunday was Sanctity of Human Life. It is a reminder of the heinous decision committed by seven of the nine justices sitting on the United States Supreme Court who, in 1973, legalized

abortion. Since then over 60 million babies have been aborted. Last week the governor of my birth state, New York, signed a bill into law allowing for late term abortions and the State Congress loudly applauded.

God help us.

If all we are is a blob of tissue forming in the womb then why have any laws or regulations?

Why have laws surrounding murder?

Go ahead and euthanize the elderly or allow for assisted suicide.

In Searching for Adam, David Casas writes that “concentration camps, gulags, killing fields and abortion clinics are all monuments to secularism and atheism.”

If all we are is an animal why so upset when there is a mass shooting? If it's truly survival of the fittest then let the mayhem continue.

It is fundamentally wrong and I am diametrically opposed to the notion that life is cheap because we are just a more advanced form of animal and we can do with it what we want. For that matter then we are no different than a corpse lying by the side of the road.

I am not the sum of evolution waiting for the next leap into something better whose only destiny lies in fertilizing the soil for some other life form.

I am the son of God created by Him and for Him, for we were created a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5), fearfully and wonderfully made.

God made man. Man here in the Hebrew is adam. Depending on the context determines if it is referring to man generally or to Adam the person specifically. That there was only one man created initially on day 6 is clear when we read that God said it wasn't good for man to be alone. We also see in verse 27 two categories of adam or man – they are male and female.

Not only was man's creation divine, crafted by the

very hand of God, man's creation was distinct.

B. Man's Creation Was Distinct – v. 26-27

Henry Morris writes in His book *The Genesis Record* “There was to be something in man which was not only quantitatively greater, but qualitatively distinct, something not possessed in any degree by the animals. Man was to be in the image and likeness of God Himself! Therefore, he was also ‘created’ (bara) in God's image. He was both made and created in the image of God.”

So what does it mean that we are created in the image and likeness of God?

Does it mean that we bear His image in a physical way, much like we might say that we bear the image of one parent over another?

For centuries Rabbinical teaching has supported that man is made in the image of God. They understood that God deliberately created man special from all of His other creation. Rabbi Abarbanel associated the word “‘image’ with the word for shadow in order to illustrate how man is related to his Creator. He wrote that man must follow God's every way, ‘as a shadow which faithfully follows the movements of its illuminated form.’”

Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak who lived from 1040-1105 associated the phrase “‘after our likeness’ with the ability ‘to understand and to gain wisdom.’”

Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1135-1204) included the will as part of that likeness.

Rabbis through the centuries have understood the image of God to be spiritual in nature not physical.

Early church fathers like Irenaeus and Augustine and then on into the Reformers like Luther and Calvin took the meaning to be a likeness in character that was then marred by sin.

The word ‘likeness’ means resemblance or similar. We use it in comparisons that something resembles something else in appearance.

Robyn has a little dimple in her chin. David’s chin resembles hers.

My bald head resembles a bowling ball.

You might make a comment and someone will say you sound just like your mother or your father.

In Ezekiel 1:10 when he had a vision of heavenly faces he likened them to the faces of man.

To say that man was made “according to the likeness of God” means like or as. Literally it would read God created Adam in His likeness as the like of His likeness.

Simply put there is similarity between God and man as it relates to certain attributes.

Now this likeness does not, as I said earlier, include a physical body since God is a Spirit. Neither does it include God’s invisibility since we are physical. Image does not mean infinite since we are finite. We do not bear the image of His omniscience, omnipresence or omnipotence.

It does resemble God in having volition and in being rational.

Certainly it includes a consciousness and a conscience by which we know right from wrong. There is imprinted in our heart a law from God in knowing good from evil. Even though it is marred by sin, it is there.

The other created creatures do not have the capacity to reason, to create, to converse and to fellowship.

They may appear to socialize in herds or flocks, or packs or schools. They can warble or hoot or howl or woo through courtship, but it is instinctual.

Of no other part of creation other than man can it be said that they were created in the image of God.

John Philips in his commentary writes “In his nature, person and personality, in his moral and spiritual capacities, in his emotions, intellect, and will, man stands apart from the brute creation.”

An animal has no true sense of guilt.

It cannot create. From one generation of sparrow to the next, you will never see them deviate from the pattern of their nest. Only in the fictional story of the three little pigs will you see them building homes of straw, stick and stone.

They do not build a fire on which to cook a meal.

They cannot pick up a pen and paper to write a novel or through abstract reasoning conceptualize physics or calculus with the ability to send one of its kind into outer space.

Theologian Millard Erickson writes that “The image of God in humanity is critical to our understanding of what makes us human.”

Anthony Hoekema says that the Hebrew language of verse 27 makes it clear that God’s image in mankind depicts humanity as distinct from animals.

There are at least six fundamental characteristics man has been given as the image bearers of God. The first is speech. Speech in the animal kingdom is not possible. A parrot mimics the sounds it hears, it has not developed the ability to learn language. Only on TV do animals speak and only one time in recorded history did an animal speak and that was Balaam’s donkey when God opened its mouth.

A second is creativity. Early in Genesis we have man making tools and musical instruments and cities and water craft. They use wood and iron, brass and gold. He writes poetry and music. He makes pottery and paintings.

The capacity to love as a third trait we bear from our creator. Your dog’s adoring look or cat’s snuggling nature is a conditioned reflex. God is love. That is the essence of His character and He has given that to us as His image bearers. We are told in Scripture to love Him and others with the same kind of love with which He loves us.

Holiness is another of His traits passed on to us. At

their creation Adam and Eve had a holiness that was not marred by sin. But after the fall that holiness became tarnished. It is like a recessive gene in our DNA. Holiness is there within waiting to be reborn or recreated in the likeness of God as we by faith trust Christ.

Ephesians 4:24 “put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

I Peter 1:16 tells us to be holy as God is holy.

II Corinthians 5:17 says we are a new creation in Christ. As a new creation we are once again the image bearers of Christ, reflecting the His character.

The image of God in man is also in his immortality. The choice we make in this life will determine where we spend eternity in the next life.

We have been given the capacity to choose and to act, a freedom to think and to do.

Let me mention one more and that is the capacity for fellowship – fellowship not just with others but especially with God. In chapter 2 and 3 we will see this fellowship between Adam and God as they walked and talked together in the garden. We have been created with the capacity to know God and to talk with God, to worship Him and to praise Him.

These are all separate from the rest of the animal kingdom. As the image bearers of God we have the ability for human dignity. We understand the value of life and have been made aware of redemption with the ability to choose redemption or not. We alone of all God’s creation can hear and respond to His Word. No other creature can. We are both responsible and accountable to Him as moral, spiritual beings.

As God’s crowning creative act, we are distinct from everything else in creation.

There is one more thing that separates us from all other creatures. We read about it in verses 26.

C. Man’s Creation Was Dutiful – vs. 26

Man alone has been given the responsibility along with accountability to rule over God’s creation. To are its stewards to tend and care for it. We were created with the capacity to work.

Together, both male and female share in the blessings and responsibilities of taking care of God’s creation. Let’s make certain we are doing what we can as its care takers.

Henry Morris writes “Man has a moral consciousness, the ability to think abstractly, an understanding of beauty and emotion, and above all the ability to knowingly and purposely (and purposefully) worship and love God the Creator.”

As part of my devotions this year I’m reading a book of Puritan prayers. I read one prayer each day. Here is an excerpt of one of those prayers I read this past week, written a couple centuries ago but a fitting prayer for today as we think about what kind of image bearer we are. “If traces of Christ’s love-artistry be upon me, may He work on me with His divine brush until the complete image be obtained and I be made a perfect copy of Him, my Master.”

We are created to resemble God in character as His image bearers.

As a new creation in Christ, do others see His image in you or are there characteristics that veil that image?

What am I doing to become a clearer image of God?

We are more than the summation of millions of years of chance. We are created in the image and likeness of God. In reverence and out of devotion to our Creator bear His image well.