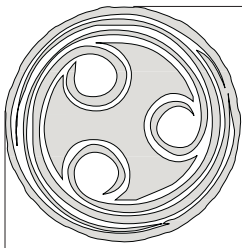


# The Glory of God and the Significance of Man Genesis 1:26-2:4



sermonnotes

*"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas."*

**From Psalm 8**

*"The only home which is safe for anyone to be born into is the home that is ready to welcome someone who does not belong there by right of kinship, but belongs there in virtue of hospitality."*

**James T. Burtchaell**

## Introduction

As we saw last week the significance of man comes from the glory of God. Just as a work of art gains its worth from the reputation of the painter, so our significance and meaning results from the greatness of our creator. Our worth therefore is not in what we do, or what we have, but in who we are! Today I want us to see that man was created as the crowning glory of God's creation and given a very specific task to be co-regent with God on earth. Whereas this image is lost in the fall, it remains the dominant reason for us to treat people with dignity and respect (**James 3:9**). It is also important to see that in spite of the fall of mankind into sin, God's plans were not thwarted, and what He created in this garden is realized in His Son for His greater glory (see **Psalm 8** cf. **Hebrews 2:5-9**).

## From The Head...

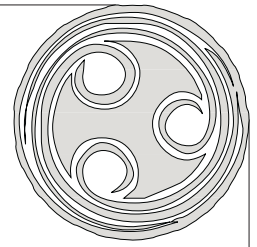
### Man as the Glory of God (Genesis 1:26-27)

As we saw last week, the Trinitarian God created mankind in His image. There are many other possibilities for the plurality of language used here in these verses (i.e. "Let us...In our") including plurality of majesty, the host of heaven (angels) and the possibility of polytheism. However, the Spirit of God is already introduced (verse two), and even though Moses may not have had a fullness of understanding of the Trinity, he is writing under the authority of the Holy Spirit, and he most likely had a basic understanding of plurality within unity since this concept makes its way throughout the Old Testament and is more fully realized in the New Testament through Christ, when we find that Christ is definitely present during the creation (**Colossians 1:15-17**), giving humanity its great significance and dignity, and calling us to be imagers of His glory. It is significant that the language changes from "Let there be," to "Let us make" when coupled with the fact that verse 27 uses the word "create" (bara) three times emphasizing the significance of this work on the sixth day.

It is also quite significant that God, when emphasizing His image, created humanity both male and female. Not only does this absolutely emphasize the equality of men and women, it also reflects something about humanness and divinity that is different from the surrounding creation mythology. We are not human apart from the "other." Otherness is what gives us our foundation for practicing compassion, love, and unity within diversity. Therefore differences need to be emphasized as much as equality or unity. It emphasizes the practical workings of the godhead, which existed infinitely in perfect love and community, while displaying perfect cooperation and submission in accomplishing its mission of "self glory." Pastor John Piper writes that, "*The chief end of God is to glorify God, and enjoy Himself forever.*" Even salvation ultimately is for His glory, not our own (**Ezekiel 36:22ff; Romans 3:23-25**). God's affections, like our own affections, need to be placed on the greatest object in the universe. For us, that's God, For God, that's Himself. God is fully satisfied, content, and

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in control and is bringing about His will through a perfect understanding of every action in eternity. Subsequently, He hates evil, yet can use it for His purposes, which gives us great security knowing that He is ultimately in control of "ALL" things. Study the following verses (**Job 42:2; Psalm 33:10-11; 135:5-7; Proverbs 16:33; 21:1; Isaiah 46:9-10; Lamentations 2:11** cf. **Lamentations 3:37-38; Matthew 10:29; Acts 4:23-28; Revelation 17:17**). God's sovereignty, pleasures, and glory are the foundation for our joy and hope! This truth of God's glory is seen in the relationship between men and women. The further we get from understanding this, the further we get from realizing our purpose. In the midst of equality of being we are created with differing roles. Man is called to headship, as seen in the fact that he is created first from God, and names the animals, while the woman was created out of man, and reflects God's glory by lovingly submitting to man's role as head (see **Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11**).

#### **Man as Co-Regent (Genesis 1:26-27 cf. Psalm 8, Hebrews 2:5-9)**

The idea of man's "rule" is one of benevolent rule, making decisions for creations, and acting as its federal head. God placed mankind as the "vice-regent" in order to co-rule with God over His creation. Man is meant to fill the earth as God had done and to serve creation. The problem with this cultural mandate is that we see man beginning to fill this earth after the fall. The fall has marred man's purpose to glorify God and instead man has attempted to glorify himself. In spite of the fall, the perfect man came in the person of Jesus Christ to fulfill what God has called mankind to do. He redeemed us for this purpose. The purpose of bringing everything in subjection to His will. The church of God exists as a family community to proclaim the good news of redemption of individuals and the culture they live in.

#### **Man as Caretaker of the "Missio Dei" (Genesis 1:28)**

Not only are we supposed to be co-rulers with God on earth, we are also told to, "Be fruitful," to "fill it," and to "subdue" it. A misinterpretation here can skew much of our theology of gender relations, marriage, singles, environmentalism, etc. First we are called to, "Be fruitful and multiply." There is no doubt that this means we are called to have children (see **Psalm 127:3; Jeremiah 29:4ff**), but it means more than this, and needs to be read with the fullness of Christ's words on the subject of family. Multiplying is not our or God's goal. God's glory is (see **Jeremiah 43:7**). Children are a blessing, not the blessing. Our joy is complete in Christ--not marriage or child bearing. When we skew this idea we either become "Focus on the Family" conservatives or "Feminist" liberals, which consistently miss the point of family. Family (no matter how you choose to define it) is not the savior of our community, Christ is. However, when the family recognizes that it is a missional post in existence for the glory of God, and the furthering of His mission, then children become its blessing and the family can stand as a beacon of light to God's glory. Jesus Himself redefines what it means to be a family when He says, "*Whoever does the will of God, He is my brother and sister and mother*" (**Mark 3:31-35**). Whereas selfish culturally saturated individual singles need to take a long hard look at why they are single, singleness can be a great thing in the service of our Lord and doesn't need to be seen as a second class status (**Matthew 19:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7: 24-35**). Marriage and child bearing does not cure selfish individuality, nor is anyone made complete in any one but Christ. The issue is purpose and mission. Most of us are called to marriage, but we must find our mates in that mission, and see our marriage and subsequent family as an extended mission. Those who are called to be single must likewise see their purpose in the same vein. Apart from living for this created purpose, either being single or being married will end in a disappointing self-centered depression. We are called to, "Be fruitful," which has a lot more to do with what we are filling this earth with than just multiplying. We are called to be fruitful for His glory (**Isaiah 43:7** cf. **Matthew 3:8; 7:16; Romans 7:14; Colossians 1:10; Galatians 5:22**). The idea of "subduing" creation is to fight against evil and oppression, and care for the creation that God has placed in our hands. Without the "Missio Dei" (Mission of God), neither singleness nor marriedness matters. A Christian home is a mission base when we live intentionally in community, seeing our possessions and our money as a way to spread the gospel. A Christian home is a mission

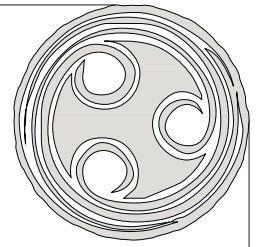
base when we eradicate our insular western concept of the nuclear family and open our homes to our extended family, the church, for the sake of the gospel.

**The Lord as Provider and Protector (Genesis 1:29-2:4)**

Not only does God create us, He creates what is necessary to sustain us. He establishes our food base to *provide* for us physically and He draws the boundaries on time and space to *protect* us from self-destruction. In these verses He sets time boundaries demanding rest for His creation knowing our need for this. In chapter two He sets further boundaries for the good of His creation, which of course we disobey, making ourselves as the final arbiters of our ethics and morality. Most of the evil that happens to us in this life is caused by us (or someone else) violating biblical principles of ethics and morality or simply failing to live for the glory of God.

It would be easy to react to this message out of contempt for its content. I beg you, however, to take a long look at what you are created for, and how God has uniquely created us male and female in order to handle the roles He has given us for our own greater glory. I pray that our hearts are molded around God's word as our authority and not on our cultural assumptions and constructs that often guide our thinking and subsequent actions. Whether we call ourselves liberal or conservative, I pray that we begin to drop those labels for biblical. As Jesus says, we are His as we do His will and live for His purposes. We must place our worth in the fact that we are made in His image, and recreated in the image of the perfect man, Jesus Christ, and that we are created with a purpose to do His will here on earth!

**sermonnotes**



**... To The Heart**

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