

How Did God Create Human Life?

On Sunday we continued our sermon series on Faith and Science inspired by Dr. Francis Collins' best-selling book *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*.

1. Warm-up Question: In the Genesis creation story, before God creates the second human (Eve), Adam reviews the animals in search of companionship. If you had to pick an animal for companionship, and couldn't pick a cat or dog, what animal would you choose?
2. Ever since Charles Darwin introduced the theory of evolution in 1859, a huge debate has raged among Christians. Some believe God created people in one 24-hour day in a direct, hands-on way; others believe God created us gradually over time through the process of evolution.
 - a. Which view do you embrace – and why?
 - b. In your view, what's the strongest argument for God creating humans through evolution? What's the strongest argument for God creating us directly in one day?
 - c. Here's a question for those who believe God created through evolution. Why do you think God took millions of years to create humans through the gradual process of evolution when instead God could have created us in a single day?
 - d. Read Genesis 1:1-27, as printed on p. 3. In what ways is the Genesis creation account consistent with evolution? In what ways is it inconsistent?
 - e. At LifeJourney, we welcome and respect both creationists and theistic evolutionists. In your view, is that a good thing? Why or why not? Why do so many churches have so much trouble embracing people with both viewpoints?
3. Some might say, "Whether you believe God created via evolution or in six 24-hour days really doesn't matter because all of us agree that (one way or another) God is the Creator. So what's the big deal?" But that misses the point, Jeff suggested, because the real issue here is not how God created, but how we should see the Bible.
 - a. Jeff gave the example of someone trying to use an English Literature textbook to learn about math, but having no success. The point being, you have to know the purpose of a book before you will know how to use it. Even a perfect English Lit book isn't going help us with questions about math. Similarly, to use the Bible properly, we first have to determine its purpose. Some Christians believe the purpose of the Bible is to convey spiritual truth, period. Others believe the purpose is not just to convey spiritual truth, but also truth about other subjects like science. Which view of the Bible do you embrace – and why?

- b. One of the most famous verses in the Bible about the Bible is II Timothy 3:16, which says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.” According to this verse, what’s the purpose of the Bible?
4. Regardless whether you believe the purpose of the Bible is focused singularly on conveying spiritual truth or is broader and also encompasses science, we all agree that great spiritual truth can be found in the Genesis creation story. And one of those great spiritual truths is found in Genesis 1:26-27, “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over . . . everything that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in God’s image, in the image of God they were created: male and female God created them.”
- a. Read what Dr. Peter Enn says on p. 4 about what being created in God’s image meant in the historical context in which Genesis was written. What do you find most striking in Enn’s remarks?
 - b. Jeff said that Genesis 1:26-27 represents our personal mission statement as human beings. How would you describe that mission in your own words?
 - c. What are the implications of Genesis 1:26-27 for how we interact with animals, nature, and mother earth?
 - d. What are the implications of Genesis 1:26-27 for how we interact with the people around us?
 - e. Sometimes we twist ourselves into pretzels trying to discover God’s will for our life, assuming that there must be one great epic thing out there that we’re supposed to find and do. Jeff suggested that finding God’s will is as simple as seeking to be an “image bearer of God” in whatever situations life drags us into. Is that enough of a purpose to make your life feel deeply meaningful?
 - f. Give an example of a time in the past week when you responded to a situation faithfully as an “image bearer of God.”
 - g. Give an example of a time in the past week when you failed to respond to a situation as an “image bearer of God.”
5. Based on Sunday’s sermon and our discussion today, has anything shifted or solidified in your view of the Bible and science?

Genesis 1:1-27

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, ‘Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, ‘Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.’ And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’ And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.’ And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.’ ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.’ And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

²⁷ So God created humankind in God’s image, in the image of God they were created; male and female God created them.

What Does “Image of God” Mean?

By Peter Enn, BioLogos.org

“Many scholars draw a parallel between the image of God in Genesis and images of kings in the ancient world. Rulers could not be everywhere at once, and travel was slow. So, they would erect monuments or statues of themselves throughout their kingdoms. These ‘images’ let everyone know that the king’s rule extended wherever his image was found.

Another kind of image in the ancient world is an idol, a physical object that represented the god in the temple. Idols were not considered gods themselves. They were statues that let you know the god was in some mysterious sense ‘present.’

[Ancient] statues of kings and of gods help us understand what [Genesis means when it said] humans [are] made in God’s image: humans are placed in God’s kingdom as God’s *representatives*.

J. Richard Middleton (Roberts Wesleyan College) puts it well in [The Liberating Image](#). He [says] that the image of God describes ‘the royal office or calling of human beings as God’s representatives and agents in the world.’ Image of God means that humans have been given ‘the power to share in God’s rule or administration of the earth’s resources and creatures.’

When one reads [Genesis 1:26-27](#) with this in mind, the point becomes fairly obvious: ‘Let us make humankind in our *image*, according to our *likeness*, and let them have dominion over the fish...birds...cattle...wild animals...creeping things.’

[Being made in God’s image] is about humanity’s unique role in being God’s kingly representatives in creation.