

Genesis 1:28-2:3

We have been studying the book of Genesis and it has been 6 weeks since we last took a look at it. Today we start into Gen 1:28 but before we do so, let's review quickly the first chapter.

We began our study by outlining the two predominant world views of creation that are present today. A world view is simply a lens through which one sees and interprets the world around him. It provides a framework with which to understand what the world is and who you are in it. It provides an answer for where you came from, where you are going, how you should relate to others, and what your meaning and purpose are in life.

The Postmodern world view is the most prevalent and is the one the majority of the Western world now embraces. It is based on the following assumptions,

1. Matter and the material world came from an infinitesimally small point of dense matter which exploded into our present universe via the big bang roughly 14 billion years ago.
2. Life came from a random collectivization of replicating molecular structures that gained complexity and differentiation over time. Hence you are a material being that is the product of a long history of chance molecular associations and mutations, some good, and some bad, which now has produced you.
3. The concept of a soul or conscience is a social construct. It exists in your head because it was inculcated by the social environment in which you grew up as a mechanism to get along and survive.
4. Your existence is explained only by chance and time. When you die that is the end. A thinking person would ask, "Why are you alive then? What is the purpose of life? The honest postmodern response is there is no purpose. It is all meaningless.
5. Therefore meaning and purpose have to be self-defined. Your destiny is self-determined. There is no truth outside of yourself or what your culture decides is truth.
6. Because you are material, and hence no different than any other living creature save for your larger brain, you have no moral claim on being "better" than any other living thing.
7. Order within society is dependent upon personal and collective power, therefore ethical, and moral decisions are relative, and accountability is only to those with greater power than you.

The Theistic world view claims,

1. There is an eternal God who has no beginning and no end who created the world and all life upon it.
2. He not only created it, but he now also sustains it, and is sovereign over it.
3. He designed it for a purpose. It is not random. He gave it design, order, and beauty.
4. There is a beginning to it and an end. Genesis chapter one is the God given record of how he did it.
5. The pinnacle of God's creative act was the creation of man and woman as noted in verses 26-31 and which the whole chapter builds up to.

6. God has a special purpose for man, to have dominion over all the other things God created. We are to be his regent. Therefore our meaning and purpose in life is centered in what God made us to be. Our purpose is not self-defined or self-determined.
7. God gave us his moral law through revelation. He revealed it to us. Thus truth is objective. It is true whether we agree to it or not. It is outside of us. Therefore truth is not a social construct.
8. God also endowed us with a soul; that part of us that has rationality, mentation, emotion, and a conscience that discerns his objective moral standard. We are therefore moral beings, accountable to God for our choices and actions.
9. We are created as God says, in his image. Image means to reflect. We reflect His creative genius. Our relationships and social structures are to reflect God's moral order. They are not power based.

This is the theistic world view to which we hold and which is in direct opposition to the postmodern one.

We then looked at each day of creation and noted it followed a similar pattern:

- a. The first step is the introductory creative word, *and God said*. This is vitally important as creation is a function of God's word. He says and it comes to be.
- b. The second step is the declaration of His will, *Let there be*.
- c. The third step is the fulfillment, *and there was*.
- d. The fourth step is the action itself, *and God made*.
- e. The fifth step is the act of naming or blessing, *and God called*, or *God blessed*.
- f. The sixth step is God's evaluation containing an expression of satisfaction, *and God saw that it was good*.
- g. The seventh step is one of termination, *and it was evening and it was morning* followed by a number.

We then noted each day.

1. Day 1, vs 3-5, The creation of light and the separation of light and darkness.
2. Day 2, vs 6-8, The creation of the sky and the separation of the sky and sea.
3. Day 3, vs 9-13, The creation of the land, the separation of the land and sea, and the creation of plant life.
4. Day 4, vs 14-19, The creation of the sun, moon and stars, and the separation of day from night.
5. Day 5, vs 20-23, The creation of fish and all other sea creatures and birds.
6. Day 6, vs 26-31, The creation of all the animals (domesticated and wild) and all small creatures, and Man.

The Edenic Covenant Part 1, 1: 28-30

Verse 28-30 presents the first part of the Edenic Covenant. The second part is found in Gen 2:15-17. The Edenic Covenant is the first of eight covenants in the Bible and the first of four which are given in Genesis.

The other seven are the Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New. A Covenant is a binding agreement where promises, obligations, and blessings are given. Biblical Covenants can be conditional or unconditional; and they can be either general (intended for all mankind) or specific (intended for Israel only).

A conditional covenant follows the formula if you will, then I will; or in Biblical terms, if I will, then God will. In other words, its fulfillment is dependent upon man accomplishing some outlined responsibility, which if done, means God will then do what He promised. The two biblical conditional covenants are the Edenic and Mosaic.

An unconditional covenant follows the formula, I will, and you do not have to do anything. Whatever is promised is to be done regardless of the other parties' actions. In Biblical terms, God unconditionally obligates Himself to bring to pass promises, blessings, and conditions for the covenanted people. It is a unilateral deal secured by the grace of God. The unconditional biblical covenants are the Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New.

The other way to think about covenants is whether they are general in the sense they are given to all mankind, or are they specifically made to Israel? Those directed to all mankind are the Edenic, Adamic, and Noahic, while the covenants made to Israel are the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New.

Covenant theology states there are only three covenants: the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. None of these are explicitly declared in the Bible and the discussion about this way of viewing the Bible we will save for another day.

Vs 28a, Then God blessed them and said,

From a hundred thousand foot view the Edenic Covenant (EC) can be thought of as how man relates to the created world God made. The EC begins with a blessing. This is the second time the word blessed is used in Chapter 1 -the first being verse 22. The Hebrew word is barak which literally means to kneel. The word works in two directions: either man to God which implies adoration, praise, respect; or God to man which implies benefit.

Vs 28b "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.

The first part of the Edenic covenant contains four provisions. In verse 28b we see the three of the four stipulations and in verse 29 and 30, the fourth. Note verse 28b,

- a. *Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth:* Adam and Eve were to procreate and fill the earth with humanity. Quite a contrast to today where we see falling birth rates all over the world.
- b. *Govern it:* other translations have *subdue*. The Hebrew word means to make subservient or to bring into bondage. Since the next phrase deals with the animal kingdom, many have interpreted this phrase, to *govern it* or *subdue it* as applying to the material being of the earth. In other words, the soil, minerals, waters, and all the other material parts of our world.

- c. *Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.* Adam and Eve were to have dominion over all the living things on earth. Another way to think about it is man was given authority over all the animals. This becomes apparent in chapter 2 when Adam names them. He was given dominion, hence had the authority to name them.

Vs 29-30, *Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food."* And it was so.

In verse 29 and 30 we have the fourth stipulation of the Edenic covenant, and that was Adam and Eve, as well as the rest of animal kingdom, were given a vegetarian diet. This provision is reaffirmed in Gen 2:16 (*you may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden*).

Vs 31, *Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.*

Verse 31 marks the result of the sixth day. Note it is more expansive than the others as God reflects on *all that He had made*. God also notes *it was very good*. This is a more emphatic *good* than the other days. Most scholars agree this is a cumulative good. In other words, the sum was greater than the parts. Each part of creation was wonderful, but once it was all completed the whole was more magnificent than any one aspect.

The Seventh Day, 2:1-3

This section will follow a different structure than the other days. Five things are emphasized,

- a. Finishing
- b. Completion
- c. Cessation
- d. Blessing
- e. Sanctifying

Vs 1, *So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed.*

Vs 1 and 2 deal with finishing, completion, and cessation. Finishing means ending an activity but which may not include all its parts, while completing means the whole project is done. Cessation means you stop working because there is nothing more to do.

Verse 1 emphasizes completion. All the individual parts of creation: the heavens, the sun, moon, stars, and sky; all the earth, its land, and waters. Its mountains, valleys, and plains; all of life, plants, birds, animals, fish, insects, are all done and the whole endeavor is complete. Verse 1 is therefore a summary of all that occurred in the first six days.

Vs 2, On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested^[a] from all his work.

Verse 2 emphasizes finishing and cessation. God finished His work. Each individual part is now complete. So, God rested. The Hebrew word for rest is Shabbot. Here it is used as a verb and means to stop work. It is the cessation of activity because the work is done. It does not mean God was tired and lay down to recuperate (also note the command to observe the sabbath or seventh day does not appear until Exodus-so this is not a command to Adam and Eve to observe the sabbath). To summarize, God simply stopped working on the seventh day because the work was done.

Vs 3, And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

Vs 3 now emphasizes blessing and sanctification. First God blessed the seventh day. This is the third time blessing has been used so far (see Gen 1:22 and 1:28). Again, the word means to bestow benefit.

Sanctification means to set apart. And this is what God does as He declared the seventh day as Holy. God sets apart the seventh day as it marks the completion of creation. God's resting on the seventh day becomes the basis for the Sabbath given in Ex 31. The word *rested* again marks the idea of completion and cessation.

So what have we learned?

1. Man is the apex of God's creative work.
2. The man and the woman were to multiply and fill the earth.
3. God gave the man and the woman a specific task; to subdue (govern) the earth and have dominion (authority) over all its life forms.
4. God would provide for both man and the animals by providing edible vegetation.
5. God blessed it all.
6. God finished and completed his work, then set apart the seventh day to mark the end of creation.