

The Garden of Eden Outline

Genesis 1:26-31; 2:4-17

- I. Obviously somethings wrong!
 - A. Why is there much good but also much evil in the world?
 - 1. Calvin—... “*Many things which are now seen in the world are rather corruptions of it*”.
 - B. Genesis chapter 2 begins the explanation on good and evil.
- II. Man made in the image of God (1:26-27)
 - A. Man was made in God’s image, animals were made for God’s glory.
 - B. What does it mean for man to be made in God’s image?
 - 1. Man does not have the capacity to grasp being in God’s image.
 - 2. Man cannot grasp what it means to be human!
 - C. Two conflicting world views:
 - 1. The Christian world view:
 - a. All human life is made in the image of God = sanctity of all human life unborn and born.
 - 2. Secular world view:
 - a. Godless = life is not sacred.
 - Weimar Germany after World War I.
 - D. God blessed male and female.
 - 1. *Be fruitful and multiply*
 - 2. *Subdue the earth and have dominion over all things in it.*
- III. God forms man (1:27; 2:7)
 - A. A new name for God—YAHWEH
 - B. God *created* man and God *formed* man (2:7).
 - 1. God created man *bara* out of nothing in 1:27.

- a. Bara = the non-physical part of man (image of God- spirit)
 - 2. God formed man from the dust of the ground.
 - a. The physical body
 - 3. God's image is non-material attributes: consciousness, conscience-ness, thinking, wisdom, love, creativity, intelligence, discernment, etc.
- IV. The substance the body was formed from.
- A. The dust of the ground
 - 1. Genesis 3:17-19 You came from dust you will return to dust.
 - B. Our body's final destination—back to dirt
 - 1. Psalm 103:13-16
 - 2. Isaiah 40:6-8
 - 3. 1 Peter 1:22-25
 - C. Our body's are *fearfully and wonderfully made* (Psalm 139:13-18).
 - D. There's more than our physical bodies (Ecclesiastes 12:7).
- V. The source of human life (2:7)
- A. God breaths life into man.
 - 1. There is no life apart from God (Genesis 22:7; Job 34:14).
- VI. The secret of human life (2:7b).
- A. Man becomes a *living soul*.
 - B. “*You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body.*” -George MacDonald
 - C. All persons have souls and their souls are eternal.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord Romans 6:23

The Garden of Eden Pastoral Notes

Genesis 1:26-31; 2:4-17

Some questions were asked (David Atkinson)... *How can human life be so rich and prosperous and yet so flawed?... How can it be that human beings so much long for God and yet so insistently flee from God?...How can human beings create so much excellence and beauty only to find that our finest achievements are subject to decay?...*

Why are even the most intimate and life-giving aspects of human relationships touched with pain and sorrow?...Why is everything and everyone overshadowed by death... We have a standard of living which allows us to concentrate on the quality of our personal relationships in a way earlier generations could not... and yet we find ourselves unable to make personal commitments.

How is it that nuclear energy can be used for so much good and so much evil?

How is it that technology can be used for so much good and so much evil?

How is it that smart phones can be used for so much good and so much evil?

How is it that AI can be used for so much good and so much evil?

We can go on and on...It was this line of thinking that grabbed me while in Israel earlier this year... just a few hours after serving alongside of 23 other pastors, feeding 300+ very grateful young Israeli soldiers...then walking among the tragic rubble of Kibbutz Kfar Aza near Gaza where the most heinous...appalling... unimaginable acts of humans... Hamas... to innocent women, children, babies... and men...mostly peaceful farmers and farm workers...students...young families...I won't describe what I saw with my own eyes....what is all that?...why?

There is such contradiction sewn up inside mankind...at one moment man can be loving and kind and the next moment committing unimaginable acts of murder... we saw that play out yesterday at the Trump rally... tragic...

Calvin said hundreds of years ago... "*Many things which are now seen in the world are rather corruptions of it*"... About one hundred years later... the famous French mathematician/philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote:

"Man's greatness and wretchedness are so evident that the true religion must necessarily teach us there is in man some great principle of greatness and some great principle of wretchedness. It must also account for such amazing contradictions."

Both are correct... the world, the cosmos in its original form was perfect... it was "good"... but something happened...something cataclysmic...something that must be understood... and fortunately to answer Pascal... the true religion answers that principle within mankind... within

all mankind that is a war between good and evil...we are beginning to uncover all that here in the opening chapters of Genesis.

We have been looking at the creation of the cosmos... the six days of creation... where God created all things... He created the universe... He created the earth... then He proceeded to fill the earth... and the great consummation of all of creation was the creation of mankind... humankind.

Intentionally I jumped over the last few verses in chapter 1...verses 27-31 last week because they go so well with where we are in chapter 2.... Beginning at verse 4... we are now laying the groundwork to understand what Calvin and Pascal were alluding to.... This morning and the rest of our time in Genesis (1-3) will lay out the explanation of why is there good and evil in all mankind.

Chapter two takes us back into chapter one... where chapter one gave us the big picture of creation... chapter two hones in on some of the very important details of that creation... the supreme aim of chapter two is theological...

The writer...Moses... takes us back to the creation of man... and woman... and brings us to the Garden we call Eden.... In that garden is a tree called **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**...and thus the testing of man... the very foundation of the true spiritual condition of fallen man. That's where we will end up some day hopefully soon...

We may not even make it into the garden this morning!..[on our way to the garden].So...first back up into chapter 1.

In verse 27 of chapter 1 we see that **God created man in His own image... in the image of God He created him...male and female He created him**...man AND woman are created in His image...this is the crowning part of His creation... the only creature that is made in His image.

Note this... 1. Man was made in His image 2. All other creation reflects His glory.....every part of creation from the smallest atom to the largest star declares the glory of God... but all of it does so unconsciously... rocks have no consciousness but they declare they were made...created!

A forest...the Grand Canyon have absolutely no idea they declare the glory of God... but they are!... even the animals show the glory of God but are completely unconscious of their doing so.... Only in the crowning moment of creation... the end of creation does God say **Let us make man in our image**....God's great display of His glory

What does it mean to be made in God's image?...that is beyond our human capacity to understand it...what we know about what it means to be made in God's image has to be revealed to us by God Himself.... We don't even know what it means to be human!

That is being proved every day... We must learn from God what it means to be human because we are totally incapable of understanding that on our own...just read the newspapers... watch the news... we can't decide when human life begins... when it should end... we can't decide when an embryo becomes a human.... Or if it does become a human.... We don't know what a man and a woman are.

We live in conflicting world views on all this...

1. The Christian world view says that all human life, unborn and born, in the womb, out of the womb is life made in the image of God.... thus it is sacred.... And because of that there is a sanctity of life.

2. The secular view views human life completely different....there is no God... so there is no image of God.

Al Mohler had a fascinating but horrifying article about the doctors of Weimar Germany after the 1st World War... Weimar had become an extremely secular, godless culture... what happened in Weimar at that time led to the Naziism of World War II with Adolf Hitler.

What happened was a change in definition of what it meant to be human... nothing to do with God's image... there is no god... doctors in Weimar began to scale human beings on the basis of which human beings "we more human than the others"...

They began to practice Eugenics... the idea that you should encourage breeding among those who were recognized to be of superior stock... you should encourage no children from those of lesser, deficient stock...

you would eradicate lower humans by sterilization... If a child had Downs Syndrome... it was acceptable, even expected to terminate that life...basically they were "breeding what they determined was a superior race"...there was a gradation put on life... different values placed on people determined by their useful characteristics...the doctors came up with a term translated is... "*Life unworthy of life*"

They came up with a complete set of medical ethics which after the war became a huge embarrassment to the Germans... some human beings were not considered worthy of being considered human beings so it was ok to exterminate them.

Of course that thinking would never exist today... except it does... You may have heard of Peter Singer... he's been around for a long time... influential professor at Princeton University...for the last thirty years has been teaching that a child being born is not yet a human being until that child develops certain capacities:

- The capacity to communicate
- The conscious ability to contemplate a future.

SO... he says “*infanticide is not murder and should not be considered a crime*”... *when a baby is born it has a ‘tentative right to life’ ...but it has to demonstrate its worth as being a human life.*

We have not progressed any since Weimar Germany!...Genesis 1 proclaims that ALL HUMAN LIFE IS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD!... verse 28 says **God blessed them**...all of them! God speaks to them...the first thing He says to them is “*there must be more of you!*” you are to reproduce!...**Be fruitful and multiply!...fill the earth and subdue it.**

Today...except for this church... it is not fashionable to have children... the birthrate in the western world is at alarming lows...even those who like the thought of having children say things like... *I don’t want to bring a child into this world!*...what world do you want to bring them in?... this world has always been a mess!.... trust God in this!

God told the animals to be fruitful and multiply as well... but He didn’t tell them to “subdue” it...only to the Humans does He say **subdue the earth...have dominion over it...I created this earth and everything in it for you!**... *you are to enjoy it... live on it... feed on it... and care for it...you are sovereign over it*... this is not the word on the street today!... yet this is foundational!

Today there is a widely accepted thought that the world...the earth is more valuable than humans and that the earth would be better off without humans...the earth should subdue humans and have dominion over them!...

Man was made in God’s image.

1. God forms man

Read 2:4-6

First thing to notice... there’s a new name for God introduced in verse 4...remember in chapter one... God’s referred to as Elohim... means “power and might”... He is God Almighty!... He is the all-powerful God who created the cosmos....

Now in verse 4 He is YAHWEH or Jehovah... translated in your Bibles as “Lord”...this is significant...this name for God comes when man has been created... this is the God that can be assessable to all who call upon His name... this the God who is present.

There’s a lot of ambiguity in those verses... much we cannot fully understand in light of chapter one... apparently different conditions prevailed on earth in those early days that prevail now.... There was no rain on the earth... rain didn’t come until the flood....

Verse 6 tells us that there was a “mist” providing water on the land... that would better be translated a “river” or “stream”... water coming up out of the ground.

Read verse 7

God *formed* man...back in chapter one... it says God *created* man....

Read 1:27

As we noted a few weeks ago... the word for “create” there is the Hebrew word “Bara”... which is the idea of making something out of nothing... God made man out of nothing as He did everything else.... He simply spoke man into existence... but here in verse 7 of chapter 2...

Which is a more detailed account of the creation of man... the word “bara” is not used...so was man bara/created? Or was he “formed”?...in the world of Biblical criticism much is made of this suggesting that the Bible contradicts itself... it doesn’t... I want to get into this... I think it’s important.

The word “formed” in verse 7 is the word “yassar” in Hebrew...In Genesis 1 man is created from nothing... and here man is formed FROM something...dust from the ground... listen carefully...being created in the image of God in chapter one is not talking about man’s physical body...Man was created in God’s *image*...

God has no physical body... only when God comes to earth as Jesus Christ did He have a physical body... that’s not what Genesis 1 is talking about... John 4:24 tells us that God is spirit...immaterial... so man being made in His image is talking about man’s spirit...our spirit is in His likeness... Our soul... our spirit.

God’s image then is non-material attributes... consciousness...conscience-ness... thinking... wisdom.... Love... creativity... intelligence...discernment...despite what you think about your dog or cat... animals don’t have these things.

So... man’s physical body was not created out of nothing... but man’s soul, or spirit was...Adam’s body... and every man since... your body and my body was “formed” from previously existing material....and that previously existing material...dust from the ground...has no life in it.

2. The substance the body was formed from

The dust of the ground turn over to Genesis 3...I think this is important... we will look at this in detail in a few weeks... after the fall of man... after Adam and Eve sinned and because the consequences of sin is death... God reveals here what happens to man at death.

17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’;

Because of that... this is your new reality.

Cursed is the ground because of you; In pain you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

That's it!... You were all formed out of dirt... and when you die... you will go back to dirt!... this is what the atheists have been telling us all along!...*when you die you just go back into the ground!*.... there's no hope in any of that!...

I come from a line of pastors on my mother's side of the family... years ago...in my childhood.. I got into many discussions with them regarding what happens when you die...

One of them was horrified at the thought of a Christian having a loved one's body cremated after death.... *The body is the temple of the Lord... we are to take care of it... put it in the nicest casket you can afford and bury it....*

at the funerals of some of my relatives... my pastor uncle would say a few words at the burial site then grab a handful of dirt and sprinkle it on the casket.... *For you were made from dust and to dust you shall return.* I always went away depressed!... That's it?

Funerals are tough things... we get confused at why we do what we do... we want to respect the deceased we want to comfort the grieving...

The point is... so much was and still is made of the physical body at the time of death...our bodies are composed of a chemical constituency that immediately begins to decay when life is no longer...that is why as soon as one dies they ship them off to the funeral home to pause the decay long enough to get it through a funeral service...

No one ever talks about this in church but I think we need to...if you haven't had to deal with death you will... either your own or someone else's...it's such an emotional time when someone you love dies and you have to make funeral arrangements...*I want the best for grandma...* you can spend a life's savings on an expensive casket for a body that is going to go back to the dirt... regardless of how much you spend!

I've spent time in the back room of the mortuary...I know what goes in the preparation of a body after death to make it "presentable" at the funeral service...If you think a dead body is still the temple of the lord... you should think again... what the mortician does to that body is every bit as destructive as having the body cremated...

[Are you ok with this?]

Over the last ten years both of my parents died... My dad ten years ago, my mother during covid...both my sister and I knew that they were no longer in their bodies... the body was just a shell... but their souls had taken up residency in heaven.... so we had them both cremated...which was their wish.

When my mom died... my sister and I were talking about the cremated bodies... I said to my sister *why don't you bring dad...the urn... and we'll take them both back to California and spread the ashes...* she said..... *I don't have dad...you have dad...*I said *I don't have dad, you have dad!*...neither of us had dad!..

I called over to Shorts and asked them if they had seen my dad they said they didn't... We had lost dad!...the day we were to pick up mom...her urn... Shorts called us and said *lo and behold we found your dad!*

I know all that sounds horrible... but the truth is... once each parent died... the body will simply go back to the dust of the ground... our joy and happiness resides in the fact that they both knew and loved Jesus... and they are in heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

As for the body... regardless of the mound of dust it will eventually make... it will be resurrected...1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4

When I die I want someone to dig a grave and put a sign in it that says *absent from the body present with the Lord!*

The body is going back to the dust... but our hope is not there!... our hope is where our spiritual souls are going... and our future brand new resurrected bodies... a heavenly body...not a physical body...The source of our spiritual body is not the dust of the ground...the Bible is clear on all this.

Psalms 103:13

**13 As a father has compassion on his children,
So Yahweh has compassion on those who fear Him.**

Why would He have compassion?

**14 For He Himself knows our form;
He remembers that we are but dust.15**

**As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flowers.**

**16 When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,
And its place acknowledges it no longer.**

Interesting Psalm... God has compassion for us because He knows we are made from dust and back to dust we will go... He knows that our lives are short... Like grass... and like a flower in the field... and no matter who we are... eventually we will be forgotten here on earth... God has compassion on us because we all will have to deal with the loss of death.....and that is unsettling to say the least.

Isaiah 40: great words of comfort to God's people Israel... **1 "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God.**

6. A voice says, "Call out."

Then he answered, "What shall I call out?"

All flesh is grass, and all its lovingkindness is like the flower of the field.

7 The grass withers, the flower fades,

When the breath of Yahweh blows upon it;

Surely the people are grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades,

But the word of our God stands forever.

Now this passage is quoted in several places in the New Testament... in 1 Peter 1 it is in the context of being born again...

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a love of the brothers without hypocrisy, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³ for you have been born again not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

"All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, ²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures forever." and this is the word which was proclaimed to you as good news.

What's the good news?... the good news is... the reality for *all* people is that life is short... like grass and flowers... beautiful for a day.. then they wither and die... BUT... for all who have embraced the truth proclaimed in this book... the gospel of Jesus Christ... your bodies will wither and die...they will go back to dust...but your souls will be in glory for all of eternity!

Back to Genesis 2:7... a little more about God forming man... that Hebrew word for "formed" *Yasar* carries with it the idea that the creator formed man out of dust with an intricate design... God designed you... He designed me... I think it would be correct to say it is like a potter with his clay... He has a design in mind... and with His hands He molds, shapes and "forms" his intended vessel.

Psalm 8, the Psalmist is blown away with the magnificent work of God with just His fingers... **When I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers the moon and the stars, which You have established;**⁴ **What is man that You remember him, and the son of man that You care for him?**

This is the creator who fashions man from dust... another use of that word *Yasar* is in Psalm 94... **He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who *formed yasar* the eye, does He not see?**

Think about your eye and the amazing design that it has... with all our science and all our technology... we cannot reproduce the human eye... my point?... we have been carefully and

purposely designed and formed by our loving creator...we may be formed of dust... but what the creator can do with dust!...Psalm 139

For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb The picture of a tapestry¹⁴ **I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;**... Fearfully when translated from the Hebrew means with great reverence, heart-felt interest, and with respect... we have been crafted with great respect, honor, and reverence...

Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, referring to the forming inside the womb... **And intricately woven in the depths of the earth;** the baby in the womb is a tapestry intricately designed and made.

16 Your eyes have seen my unshaped substance; And in Your book all of them were written The days that were formed for me, when as yet there was not one of them.¹⁷ How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!¹⁸ If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You....

What an amazing Psalm!...God is forming every human being out of the dust with incredible design... God's very character goes into the creation of every person

One of the great foundations that our culture has been dismantling is the sanctity of life... when you realize that God planned you before the dust ever existed...you were already designed... with purpose... God was at work forming you before you came out of the womb of your mother.... You were **fearfully and wonderfully made**...

When you realize this... how can the unborn life be willfully terminated?...so when we talk about God forming man from the dust of the ground... you are talking about a beautiful design and substance that reflects the glory of God.

We're not done with dust...I have a direction I want to move us... hang in there with me.... Psalm 22 a Messianic Psalm we often read at Easter...

All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: KJV

All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.³⁰ Their seed will serve Him;

The body was formed from the dust of the ground and it will go back to the dust in the ground...and that physical body has no capability of "keeping alive" the soul... the spiritual part of the body.

Ecclesiastes 3... **20 All go to the same place. All came from the dust, and all return to the dust.21 Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?**

There is a hope in the human world that is not true in the animal world... the breath of man... the immaterial part of man... ascends upward... the immaterial part of animal stays on earth...by the way...Ecclesiastes has a lot to say about death... there are warnings in those passages telling us we need to be careful how we live....death is coming!

Ecclesiastes 12:7 **then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.** Now we have a theology on dust!...man was made from dust.....Back to Genesis 2:7...

3. The source of human life

What is human life?... what makes a human a human?...This is where we drastically differ from the atheist... We agree that when we die the body returns to the ground... for atheist... that's it!... but news for the atheist..... there's much more (as we've alluded to in that last Psalm).

There is an immaterial part of the human life... the soul and a spirit... all we can see in this room are physical bodies... and that's the way we relate to each other... but we all have thoughts, feelings, ideas... attitudes... those for the most part are unseen... except for attitudes maybe... we are all aware that we exists... we know that we are more than body...2:7b **Then Yahweh God formed man from dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils** (which are made of dust) *the breath of life* ;

God breaths life into all living beings... There is no life apart from God... this says *God breathed into man life*...Hebrew word *Nesama* some use *nesama* interchangeably with the English word "spirit"...it is used for both animals and humans.

Genesis 22:7 This is the flood of Noah... after the water covered the land.. all the animals died from drowning... it says: **All in whose nostrils was the Nesama *breath of the spirit of life*—of all that was on the dry land—died.**

Point?... even the animals exist and has life from the breath of God... animals only exist because of God...humans only exist because God breathes life into them...God controls the breath of life.... Over in Job...

Job 34:14

13 Who appointed Him with authority over the earth? And who has laid on Him the whole world? 14 If He should set His heart on it, If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,...the picture is God taking back all the breath that He used to bring life...**15 All flesh would breathe its last together, and man would return to dust.**

God breaths life into man and when God determines to take the breath from man... Man returns to dust. ...we are alive because of the breath of God...for humans... it doesn't end there.

4. The secret of human life.

Verse 7 said God... **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...** and then it says... **and so the man became a living being...** or literally... the man became a living soul... the Bible is not exactly clear about all things regarding the soul... sometimes the word is interchangeable with spirit.

What we can conclude...the human soul is the part of a person that is not physical. It is the part of every human being that lasts eternally after the body experiences death. ..Genesis 35:18 describes the death of Rachel, Jacob's wife, saying she named her son "**as her soul was departing.** the soul is different from the body and that it continues to live after physical death.

George MacDonald said, "*You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body.*" In other words, personhood is not based on having a body. A soul is what is required to be a person.

Unbelievers have souls and believers have souls... All souls will go on through eternity...

It has been said that there are only two things that last: the Word of God and the souls of men. This is because, like God's Word, the soul is an imperishable thing... That thought should be both sobering and awe-inspiring.

Every person you meet is an eternal soul. Every human being who has ever lived is a soul, and all of those souls are still in existence somewhere. The question is, where? The souls that reject God's love are condemned to pay for their own sin, eternally, in hell (Romans 6:23 **For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**).

But the souls who acknowledge their own sinfulness and accept God's gracious gift of forgiveness will live forever beside still waters with their Shepherd.

**He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.**