

June 26, 2005 AM

**DAY 6: THE CREATION OF MAN
GENESIS 1:26-31**

1. *God creates Man in his own image (26-27).*

2. GOD BLESSES MAN TO BE FRUITFUL (28)

A. BLESSING AND FRUITFULNESS

Blessing and Life: "Blessing" is not merely "a good word" here. Textually, we must notice how the divine word of blessing 'fits in' with what God has been saying/doing throughout the Creation week. God speaks and it comes to be.

When God blesses them he is giving them the promise and the ability to be fruitful.

And with this promise and ability comes the responsibility to *be fruitful* (cf. the command itself).

Theme of blessing is pervasive throughout Genesis and the whole of Scripture. *God's blessing is always concerned with life.*

Theme began on day 5. Associated with multiplying life. Cf. also Gen 9.1, Noah, and the mandate after the flood.

The theme of blessing and its concern with life cannot be lost when dealing with the promise to Abraham and Christ. Blessing is a covenant promise and, therefore, a covenant theme. (This is no less true with Adam and Eve than it is for Abraham.)

God's covenant with man after sin entered into the world through Adam was not a scrapping of the original plan. God's covenant with man after the fall was put into place to deal with sin and bring God's original purposes to their fruition.

This theme of blessing throughout is inexorably bound up with God's promise of life. But after the fall of man this life would be life that came through death. Cf. Gen 12.1-3: "... *I will bless you and make your name great*, so that you will be a *blessing ...* in you all the families of the earth shall be *blessed*."

The promise = life for the world. This blessing will come through Abraham's seed.

Note what Isaac and Jacob do: they *bless* their children (cf. Gen 27, 48). This is God's covenant promise being passed through "the seed." It will be through them, in fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham, that life would come to the world.

How is this promised fulfilled? It is fulfilled in the death, resurrection and consequent gift of the Holy Spirit. Cf. Gal 3.13-14

The Spirit is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:2, 10-11). He is the one bringing life to the world.

Remember, to be a "living being" is to have the *Spirit (ruach, pneuma)* as your "breath." Blessing is tied up in life. And life is tied up in the Spirit. And so, the blessing given here in **Gen 1:28** finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and by the Spirit.

Blessing and covenant: "Blessing" is not "automatic." If this promise was going to be realized, Adam and Eve must act in faith. They would have to believe the word of God and act upon it to see the promise fulfilled.

This covenant living or covenant faith is seen throughout the history of God's people. God works through the faithfulness of his people to bring about his promises.

This does not mean, of course, that the means God ordains are "automatic;" i.e., they work no matter if God works or not. *God* is the Giver of life. He alone has the power to give life. This is true whether you are speaking about God *blessing* the land, making it fruitful, or God blessing a married couple and making them fruitful.

But ordinarily God accomplishes this work through the use of the means that he has ordained. In order for there to be a crop ordinarily, there must be plowing, planting and watering ... but God gives the increase. In order for children to be born, there must ordinarily be the combination of male seed with the female egg ... but God gives the life.

B. FRUITFULNESS AS BLESSING

Man as a sexual being: This sexuality has been the source of both blessing and cursing.

The assumption of the blessing and the consequent command to be fruitful is the underlying fact that man is sexual. This is not

denied or understood as evil in itself. Sexual relations within the divine parameters is good, right, proper and reflects the image of God in the sense of intimacy as well as fruitfulness.

Sex and sexuality are to be celebrated as good gifts from God by those who properly bare his image. But this, of course, means recognizing the divine parameters and purpose for sexuality and sex. Proper fruitfulness that comes from sexual relations can only be realized between a man and a woman in the bond of a marriage covenant.

This does not mean that all married people are “fruitful” in the full sense of the biblical demands. But this is the *starting point* for fruitfulness, not one option among many.

When man distorts the divine plan and steps over the boundaries set for him, his activities are evil and, thus, fruitless. That is, his deviant sexual activity will not bring “life” but will only produce further “death.”

Sexual deviancy is deviating from being *human*. Sexual sin is de-humanizing. And this de-humanization brings death, not just to the individual, but to societies that permit and condone such behavior.

Cf. Romans 1:18ff. Description of the fallen state of an idolatrous Gentile world. Their submission to idols which are formed and fashioned after the animals have become the gods into whose image they are being formed. They have rejected the one true and living God and worshiped idols instead. And in doing so they have become like them: *fruitless* or *lifeless*. Realized in unholy unions between men and men and women and women.

“Unfruitfulness” is also seen in the thirst for death when untold millions of children are destroyed by means of abortion. While the Church would never condone abortion, many within the Church have adopted some of the same essential elements of that worldview which allows for abortion; i.e., the despising of fruitfulness.

Note: not all unfruitfulness is the result of personal sin; cf. e.g., Sarah and Rachel. What makes their cases unusual is that their relationships are in the proper context which would normally be “fruitful.” Unfruitfulness that is condemned in Scripture is the result of relationships that go against the divine order.

Note also: There may be some instances in which birth control of some sort is acceptable (never abortion of course). E.g., the health of the mother. This needs to be the exception, though, and not the rule.

Fruitfulness as good: Having children is something that is a cause for rejoicing in the Scriptures. Not having children is something that is consistently mourned.

Man is like and is to be like the fruit trees created at the end of day 3. He has seed within himself. And with that seed he is to produce fruit. Children, in the Scriptures, are called “the fruit of the womb” (cf. e.g., Psa 127:3). The man who has his quiver full of them is “blessed” (Psa 127:5).

Fruitfulness as mission: Part of bearing God’s image in this world is being fruitful. Remember, it is the idols that don’t have life and cannot give it. Our God is the God of life. Fruitfulness, therefore, is part and parcel to our mission, or our vocation, as God’s image-bearers.

Fruitfulness is *not* merely having large families. Untrained large families are only multiple curses. That is, they will ultimately bring about death. The fruitfulness that God enjoins (as is borne out throughout Scripture) is fruitfulness at every level: having children and having faithful children. Cf. Gen 1.28; the earth must be properly subdued by them.

Fruitfulness in Christ and his Church: Jesus is the faithful husband who, with his wife, the Church, will fulfill the mandate of Genesis 1 in its deepest and fullest fashion. This does not mean that we move to a “immaterial” realm as opposed to the “merely physical” of the original mandate. The fruitfulness of husbands and wives within the Church is still a means through which dominion is being taken. As married couples have children, they are brought into the Church, taught the Gospel, trained up to love God and neighbor, and children are then sent out to do the same thing.

This is the word that challenges the pagan world at every level of his existence. It is the word that calls him to be *truly human*, to reflect the divine image of his Creator. The gospel is a call to forsake the worship of idols which is ultimately *fruitless* and *dead*, and turn to the living and life-giving God in worship.