TRUTH LESSONS—LEVEL ONE

LESSON THREE

GOD'S CREATION

OUTLINE

I. God's original creation:
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   B. The means.
   C. The process.
   D. Creation proving the existence of God.
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III. In God's creation, human life being the highest life:
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         b. To recover the earth.
         c. To bring in God's authority.
   B. Man being created in three parts—spirit, soul, and body.
   C. Man being created good and upright.
   D. Human life being only a created life.
IV. God placing man in front of the tree of life in order for man to receive Him as life.

TEXT

Our God is a God with a purpose, a will, and a plan. Thus, He created all things entirely according to His will and plan. Revelation 4:11 says, "You have created all things, and because of Your will they were and have been created." "Because" in the Greek here means "through." All things were created not by chance, nor accidentally, nor casually, but through God's planning. In God's plan, He ordained that through all things He will reach His goal. Therefore, He created all things.

I. GOD'S ORIGINAL CREATION

A. The Purpose

Colossians 1:16-18 says, "All things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and all things subsist together in Him;...that He might have the first place in all things." God's purpose in creating the universe is entirely for His Son, that His Son may have the preeminence and be glorified in all creation. Not only so, Christ the Son is God's embodiment because all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily (Col. 2:9). Therefore, when the Son is glorified, God is also expressed. God's purpose in creating the universe is that His Son may be glorified and that He Himself may be expressed.

B. The Means

In Genesis 1:1 the word "created" is *bara* in Hebrew, which means to bring something into existence out of nothing. Therefore, God's original creation was brought into existence out of nothing. How then in God's creation did He create? What was the means through which He created? Hebrews 11:3 says, "The universe has been framed by the word of God." John 1:3 also says that all things came into being through the Word of God. God spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast (Psa. 33:9). Therefore, God created the universe out of nothing by His Word. How powerful His Word is!

On the other hand, the Bible clearly tells us that God created the heavens and the earth by Christ His Son. Hebrews 1:2 says that God made the universe through His Son. Colossians 1:15-16 also says that all things were created in the Son of God. Actually, the Son of God is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14); the Two are one. The Word of God is the explanation of God; the things created through the Word of God are for the explanation of God, the revelation of God.

C. The Process

Job 38:4-7 reveals the process of God's creation. The heavens with all the hosts and angels therein were created first. The earth, with the living creatures dwelling therein, was created second. Job 38 shows us that when God laid the foundation of the earth, the stars and the angels (the sons of God) were there already. It also shows us that the earth created by God had been measured, with the line stretched upon it; everything was orderly and exceedingly beautiful. Therefore, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Not a shadow of sin nor a trace of confusion could be found in the universe then. It was altogether bright and beautiful. This shows us how bright and beautiful the Creator is.

D. Creation Proving the Existence of God

Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Although God's eternal power and divine characteristics are invisible, man can understand them by the things that were made. Man can understand and is therefore without excuse (Rom. 1:20). Hence, by looking at creation, we ought to know that there is a Creator.

II. GOD'S RESTORATION AND FURTHER CREATION

Genesis 1:2b does not refer to God's original creation—that was completed with verse 1—but to God's restoration. God was going to restore what had been damaged, and was going to have some further creation. Verse 2 starts by saying, "And the earth became waste and empty" (Heb.). "And" is a conjunction which combines two things: the first thing goes and the second thing comes. This means that after God created, some things happened, causing the harmonious and beautiful universe created originally by God to become damaged. Hence, Genesis 1:2b—2:25 shows us God's restoration of the damaged universe, plus His further creation.

Genesis 2:4 says, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.” This verse shows us both God’s original creation and God’s restoration. The first half of the verse mentions the heavens and the earth when they were created. Notice that the heavens are mentioned first and then the earth, and the verb used here is created. The second half of the verse says that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. Here, the earth is mentioned first and then the heavens, and the verb has been changed from created to made. As we have pointed out earlier, to create means to produce something out of nothing, and to make means to work upon an existing substance in order to produce something else out of it. Hence, the first half of this verse refers to God’s original creation, and the second half refers to God’s restoration of the earth and the heavens.

In Genesis 1:1 God created the heavens and the earth. Then, from verse 3 to the end of chapter one, God made the earth and the heavens. If we read verses 9 and 10, we can see that on the third day God recovered the earth. God did not create the earth, for it was there already, submerged beneath the waters. So God recovered the earth on the third day. Also, on the fourth day, God recovered the sky, that is, the heavens. Thus, in the restoration, it was not firstly the heavens, and then the earth; it was firstly the earth, and then the heavens.

A. God’s Further Creation Being according to the Order of Life

In God’s further creation, He created all things according to the order of life. First He created the things without life, and then He created the things with life. In the creation of the things with life, He also started from the lowest life, going up level by level, until He reached the highest life. First He created the life without consciousness, that is, the plant life, things such as trees, grass, and flowers. Although these have life, their life has no consciousness; hence, theirs is the lowest life. Then, God created the animal life. He also started from the lowest, the life of the animals that bear eggs, such as fish and birds. Although the life of these creatures has consciousness, it is not high enough. Then, He created the animals that bear their young alive, such as the cattle and the beasts of the earth. These animals that bear their young alive possess a life that is higher than that of the animals that bear eggs. They not only have consciousness, but their consciousness is also higher. Lastly, God created man. Man is the highest life created by God. Man also possesses the highest consciousness among the creatures.

B. The Process

The record in Genesis chapter one shows that it took six days for God to do the work of restoration and further creation.

On the first day, the Spirit of God came to brood. Furthermore, God spoke and there was light. Thus, God separated the light from darkness.

On the second day, God separated the waters under the expanse from waters above the expanse. This means He separated the heavenly things from the earthly things.

On the third day, the earth was separated from the waters. God worked on the waters, seeking to confine and limit them, so that the dry land might appear. This is just like what Jeremiah 5:22 says, that God drew a line to limit the sea. After the appearance of the dry land, God went on further to create the different plant lives, each after its kind.

On the fourth day, God restored the light bearers—the sun, the moon, and the stars—to rule over the day and over the night, and also to divide the light from the darkness.

On the fifth day, God created the living creatures in the water and the birds, the fowl in the air, each after its kind.

On the sixth day, God created the living creatures on the earth: the cattle, the creeping things, and the beasts, each after its kind. Lastly, God created man to be the center of all things.

III. IN GOD'S CREATION, HUMAN LIFE BEING THE HIGHEST LIFE

A. Man Being Created according to God's Image and Likeness

Man not only possesses the highest created life, but he is also made in God's image and after God's likeness (Gen. 1:26-27). Besides man, no other creature resembles God in image and in likeness. Man is the highest of God's created things, and he is created in God's image and after God's likeness. In God's creation, man is the best container prepared by God for His plan. In His plan God ordained that man would possess His life in order to be the brothers of His Son; therefore, in His creation, He caused man to have His image and likeness.

Image refers to the inward parts, such as the mind, emotion, and will. Man's mind, emotion, and will, which constitute the intangible man, were created in God's image. Therefore, human functions of thought, opinion, and love resemble those of God.

The image of God also refers to the characteristics of His attributes. The most prominent of God's attributes manifested in man are love, light, holiness, and righteousness. When God created man, He created him in His image, according to the attributes of His virtues, so that man can express Him through these virtues. Thus, man has the desire to have love, light, holiness, and righteousness, and these virtues are sometimes expressed in his behavior. What man has, however, is only the image and not the reality. Man must receive God as his life and content and then God's love, light, holiness, and righteousness will fill up and enrich the human virtues of love, light, holiness, and righteousness to become the reality.

Likeness refers to the outward body which constitutes the tangible man. Man's outward body was created after the likeness of God. God has His likeness. Before God was incarnated to be a man, He appeared frequently to people in the Old Testament in the

form of a man (Gen. 18:2, 16-17; Judg. 13:9-10, 17-19). The form of man is the form of God, for man was created after the likeness of God.

1. To Have Man to Express God

The main purpose of God's restoration and further creation was to have man, a corporate man, to express God (Gen. 1:26-27). The man God created was a corporate man. God did not create many men. God created mankind collectively in one person, Adam. God created Adam, and Adam was a corporate man, a collective man. When Adam was created, we were all created. We were all included in Adam. Therefore, in Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let them"—one man, but the pronoun is them. This proves that this man is a corporate man. In this verse, as the pronoun "us" signifies that God is triune, so the pronoun "them" signifies that man is corporate. God created such a corporate man in His own image and after His likeness so that man might express God Himself.

2. To Have Man to Exercise God's Dominion

God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion." God created a corporate man to exercise His dominion (Gen. 1:26-28). The word dominion includes more than just authority. Dominion means having a kingdom as a sphere in which to exercise authority.

a. To Deal with God's Enemy

The first aspect of God's intention is to deal with His enemy, to deal with Satan, who is typified by the creeping things (Gen. 1:26). In the Bible, creeping things are demonic, devilish, and satanic. The Bible uses a serpent to typify Satan (Gen. 3:1). In Revelation 12:9 Satan is called the "ancient serpent."

In God's original creation, He had only one purpose—to express Himself. But due to Satan's rebellion, God now has another purpose—to deal with His enemy. Therefore, He created man in His own image that man might express Him, and He gave him dominion that man might deal with His enemy.

b. To Recover the Earth

The second aspect of God's intention in giving man dominion is to recover the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). Man is to have dominion over the earth, to subdue it, and to conquer it. To conquer the earth means that the enemy is there already, that a war is raging. Therefore, we must fight and conquer.

c. To Bring In God's Authority

The third aspect of God's intention in giving man dominion is to bring in God's authority, to exercise God's authority over the earth. Man must exercise God's authority that the kingdom of God may come to earth, that the will of God may be done on earth, and that the glory of God may be manifested on earth.

B. Man Being Created in Three Parts—Spirit, Soul, and Body

God created man in three parts—spirit, soul, and body. First God formed man's body with the dust of the ground. Then He breathed into man's body the breath of life, which became the spirit in man. When the spirit, the breath of life, entered man's body, the soul was produced. Therefore, outwardly man has the visible body and inwardly man has the invisible spirit; between the two is the soul.

The body is on the outside to contact the things of the physical world. The spirit is on the inside to contact the things of the spiritual world. The soul, as the medium, is between the body and spirit to contact the things of the psychological world. The body has different sense organs which can contact the material things. The spirit has the functions of the conscience, the intuition, and the fellowship with God, which can contact the things of God and spiritual things. The mind of the soul is man's thinking organ; man thinks and considers—these are the functions of the mind. The will of the soul is the organ for decision-making; man decides, judges, proposes, chooses, and refuses—these are the functions of the will. The emotion of the soul is the part that governs man's pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy; man loves, hates, is excited, is depressed—these are the functions of the emotion. These three—mind, will, and emotion—added together equal the soul.

The spirit is the deepest part of our whole being, the receiver for us to receive God, and the organ to contact God and all the spiritual things (John 4:24; Rom. 1:9). Within us the sense of our need for God, the sense and understanding of God in our deepest part, and the reproof or approval of our conscience—these are the functions of the spirit. By the senses of our body we can substantiate the material things; likewise, we can substantiate the things of God and the spiritual things only by the spirit.

The spirit of man was specifically formed by God (Zech. 12:1; Job 32:8). Zechariah 12:1 says that God stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. In the universe are three equally important things: the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man has a spirit for God. God created the heavens for the earth. Without the heavens, the earth cannot grow anything. The earth was created for the existence of man, and man has a spirit within him to contain God. Thus, man is the center of God's creation and the center of man is his spirit. As far as God is concerned, if there were no spirit within man, man would be an empty shell. If there were no man on this earth, the earth would be void and, as far as man is concerned, the heavens would become meaningless. Therefore, the heavens serve the earth, the earth serves man, and man has a spirit to receive God.

C. Man Being Created Good and Upright

Ecclesiastes 7:29 says that God made man upright. When man first came out of God's creating hands, he was not crooked, evil, or defiled, but upright, good, and pure. At that time he had no sin, corruption, or defect. Thus, God considered man "very good" (Gen.

1:31). Of course, the vessel which the upright and good God had prepared for His holy and shining life cannot be evil or crooked; rather it must be good and upright.

D. Human Life Being Only a Created Life

Although man was created in God's image and after God's likeness, his life is but a created life, unlike God's life which is uncreated. As man is a created being, so man's life is also a created life. Man has a beginning and an end, so man's life also has a beginning and an end, unlike God's life which is without beginning and without end, which is from eternity to eternity. Although man's life is high, it is far inferior to God's life. God's life is eternal; man's life is temporal. God's life is divine and glorious; man's life is, at the most, pure and good, but without God's glorious nature. Although man has the form of God outwardly and the image of God inwardly, he does not have God's life within. Although man has a spirit which enables man to know God and have fellowship with God, man's spirit does not have God's life nor God's nature. Man is only a creature of God, but he does not have the uncreated life of God within.

IV. GOD PLACING MAN IN FRONT OF THE TREE OF LIFE IN ORDER FOR MAN TO RECEIVE HIM AS LIFE

After God created man, He did not put the divine life into man. Instead, He gave man a free will; He wanted man to exercise the free will to choose, to take in His life. Therefore, He placed man in front of the tree of life.

In order to give man an opportunity to choose, God put the tree of knowledge of good and evil beside the tree of life. The tree of life denotes God as the source of life; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as the source of death. These two trees signify the two sources in the universe. Many people think that if God had not allowed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to stay beside the tree of life, then there would have been no problem afterwards. However, God did not do it that way. He is great. He is so attractive as the God of glory. He did not compel man to choose Him. Instead, He allowed man to exercise his free will to choose what he thought was good. It was according to such a principle that, in the garden of Eden, God put Adam in front of two trees; He wanted man to choose Him, to take Him as life.

SUMMARY

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the universe. Later because Satan rebelled, the heavens and the earth were corrupted and thus judged by God. Then God recovered the heavens and the earth that He had judged and took a further step in creation. In this further step of creation, He made man especially in His own image, specifically creating a spirit in man so that man could contact Him, receive Him as his life and content, be brought into an organic union with Him, and become one with Him.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the purpose and means of God's original creation?

2. Why did God need to restore the original created universe and to have a further creation?
3. How long did God spend in His work of restoration and further creation? What was the process?
4. What was God's purpose in creating man in His image and after His likeness?
5. Of how many parts is man composed? What are the functions of each part?
6. At creation, did man have God's life in him? What was the attitude that man was to take?