

Genesis 97-09-07a

As we prepare to worship this morning together in fellowship in the Word of God, let's begin by going to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for all of the many expressions of your grace and your compassion on us that have sustained us and brought us to this place.

We thank you that we are alive in this age and that we have the opportunity to live this day and whatever days may mean to us in the light of your Word to accomplish your purpose and to fulfill your objectives for us. We thank you for the gift of your Spirit to dwell within us, to lead us into truth, to serve to remind us of who we are and why we're here. We thank you for your Word and for the truth that is contained therein, for the divine power that it contains and that it manifests in our lives.

We pray this morning as we worship together as we study your Word that God, the Holy Spirit, will take these things and make them real to us and incorporate them into the fabric of our souls so that we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds and we can draw ever closer to the example given to us by our Savior during his life here on earth. In so doing, reflect your glory and fulfill your purposes for us. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. For our scripture reading this morning, turn with me to Isaiah chapter 40. As you know, in our study of Genesis, we're in the middle of day six, the creation of man.

We know some things about man and as we noted last week, our study this morning is going to take a look at what it means to be created in the image of God and after his likeness. What does it mean to bear the imago dei, as they say in Latin? This is the convenient term that theologians and scholars use to address this entire area of investigation. Imago, of course, is where we get the word image and dei is the word from which we get deity and so forth.

What does it mean to bear the image of God, to be created in his image and after his likeness? We have that idea in scripture and then we also have in scripture the idea of God's ineffability, his infinity, the fact that there is no one like God. How do we reconcile these two ideas? He is like the Lord and yet we are said to be created in the image of God. We have a fascinating section.

Isaiah 40 is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible for many reasons. Let's begin in verse 9 where the prophet picks up with an exhortation to the holy city, to Jerusalem and to its inhabitants. He says, O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountains.

O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength. Lift it up. Be not afraid.

Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him and his work before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and gently lead those who are with young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure, weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the spirit of the Lord or as his counselor has taught him? With whom did he take counsel and who instructed him and taught him in the path of justice? Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket and are counted as the small dust on the scales.

Look, he lifts up the isles as a very little thing and Lebanon is not sufficient to burn nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing and they are counted by him less than nothing and worthless. To whom then will you liken God or what likeness will you compare to him? The workman molds an image, the goldsmith overspreads it with gold and the silversmith casts silver chains.

Whoever is too impoverished for such a contribution chooses a tree that will not rot. He seeks for himself a skillful workman to prepare a carved image that will not totter. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. He brings the princes to nothing. He makes the judges of the earth useless.

Scarcely shall they be planted. Scarcely shall they be sown. Scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth when he will also blow on them and they will wither and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble.

To whom then will you liken me or to whom shall I be equal says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these things, who brings out their hosts by number. He calls them all by name.

By the greatness of his might and the strength of his power not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord and my just claim is passed over by my God? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, is neither faint nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might he increases strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

It's really a tremendous application of the power of God that we see in this story of creation that we've been studying the past few weeks. And it also is a reminder to us that in the ultimate sense there is no one like the Lord. There is no philosophy.

There's no system of thought. There's no scheme. There's no technique that can introduce power for change into our lives except God.

God the creator. God the all powerful. Everything else has been created by him and without him is utterly powerless.

Return with me now to Genesis chapter 1 where we resume our study now of the first week of history. We have seen the activities of God on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and the beginning of the sixth day now. We noted that there is an interesting parallel in these days.

The first day and the third day correspond. The second day and the fourth day correspond. The third day and the sixth day correspond.

On the first day you have the creation of light and on its corresponding day, the fourth day, you have the creation of the luminaries, those to whom God delegates authority over light and darkness, day and night. On the second day, God creates the firmament and divides the waters so that you have waters below, you have sky above, and above that sky you have another set of waters like unto the first. And then on the fifth day, which corresponds to the second, you have the inhabitants of those environments created, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea.

On the third day, God created the land. He caused the waters to be gathered together into one place. I use the term created loosely.

Apparently it was there at the creation of the earth. But he gathers the sea together on the third day and causes the dry land to appear. And on the sixth day, we have the inhabitants of that environment created.

So there is a beautiful symmetry and structure in this account and in the actions of God. I find it interesting, the physicists and deep thinking scientists around the world have noted that in their search for the grand unifying theory that will explain and account mathematically for all of the major forces in the universe, gravity, electromagnetism, light and so forth. We have some formulas that govern light.

$E = mc^2$ and that sort of thing. We have other formulas that govern electromotive force and voltage equals current times resistance and so forth. But they feel like if they can arrive at the grand unifying theory, the GUC, it will be one equation that can then be used to explain everything.

But in their search for this unifying theory and even in their investigations of the various areas of physics, one of the principles that has been recognized by all scientists is what has been called the principle of beauty or the principle of symmetry. But as they arrive at the truth in

their investigations and their solving of these various puzzles and their reducing things to equations, when they arrive at something that is true, it is simple, it's elegant and it has symmetry, it has beauty. All of these incredibly complex calculations of relativity and so forth that Einstein filled blackboard after blackboard with reduced down to the very simple $E = mc^2$.

And while it is not a comprehensive equation, it is not the grand unifying theory in its elegance and in its simplicity. It goes a long way toward explaining things that you see around us. And it is a secular recognition of a divine truth.

God is symmetrical. God delights in order and in structure. And we see it throughout his word and we see it here in this passage as well.

So we have arrived now at this all important day, the sixth day, the culmination of God's work of creation. And in many ways this account implies that this day is the day that God was looking for in the first spot, that the other five days were prepared for it and laid the foundation for this sixth day. God creates the heavens and the earth.

God separates the waters and creates the firmament and populates them all toward a goal. He is going to assign responsibility for all of this to someone. He is going to assign authority and accountability over all of these things to someone.

And it is that someone whose creation culminates the creative act. And of course that is man. So in verse 26 of Genesis 1, on the sixth day, then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him.

Male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And God said, See, I have given you every herb that yields seed, which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed. To you it shall be for food. Also to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food.

And it was so. Then God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

It's interesting there in verse 31 we have a slight change in expression in Hebrew. In the first five days it is said there was evening, there was morning, a first day or day one, day two, day three. There's no specific article attached to the first day, the second day as we have it in

English.

It's day one, day two, day three, day four, day five. But this one has the article, the sixth day. And it's another thing that sets this day apart and gives it emphasis as the culmination day, the day in which God's purpose is effected.

And of course we know that because in chapter 2 we find that once God looks over the sixth day and declares it to be good, he's finished and he rests. But we want to look at this day and specifically we want to look at the creation of man. We want to investigate why it is that God says what he says here.

We noted that on the fifth day we have the first direct discourse between God and creation, the first time that God speaks to someone instead of simply speaking things into existence. He says, let there be light. But on day five he speaks to the creation and he says, be fruitful and multiply.

He gives a command to the fish and the birds. And now he, for the first time in scripture, speaks to himself. He doesn't say, let there be man.

And there was man. And this is, of course, a place where you can dwell for some time. When you look at the scripture here there are probably 26 separate issues that you can raise in this verse 26.

For example, then God said, well the verb said is in the singular. God as a person, a single person or a unity, said, the verb is singular. But then he says, let us make, and it's in the plural.

Well, with our retrospective view, having all 66 books of the Bible and understanding the Trinity and the Father and the Son and the Spirit, we say, well, this is one of the first expressions of that doctrine, that there is a plurality within the Godhead. But it doesn't tell us how many. It just is a plural.

Some people say, well, that's just the royal, the majestic, the plural of majesty, which is used by kings and queens. You know, you have the queen up there on her throne saying, we are not a nude type of thing. But actually that idea, the way that monarchs use the plural, is derivative from this passage and not the reverse.

So you have God in the singular saying, let us make man in our image according to our likeness. And then in verse 27, God created, and you're back to the singular verb again, God created man in his image, and you're back to singular. It doesn't say God created man in their image.

Some people have tried to see in this that God is speaking to an assembled company of heavenly or angelic beings and that he says to the angels, perhaps, let us make man in our image, something similar to what we are. But that falls to the ground when it says that God created man in his image, not in their image. So this plural is definitely restricted to God

himself.

He's not talking to a company of assembled creatures in heaven at this point. Because he also says, let us make, and this would somehow involve whoever he's talking to in the creative or manufacturing process. Angels, let's all gather around and let's make some men in our image and after our likeness.

And if you include them in the image, then you have to include them in the creative process. So that doesn't hold water. We don't see the angels in view here.

Just plural refers to God. A lot of people are very skeptical or cautious about the doctrine of the Trinity being seen here. They say you can't read your Christian theology back into this very ancient Hebrew account.

The Hebrews were very emphatic on the idea that the Lord, our God, is one Lord. That's the doxology and the blessing that comes up throughout their worship. He is God.

He is one. And yet the Hebrews from the beginning had to contend with this verse and this idea that there is some sort of plurality in the Godhead. I think if you look at the context, which is always one of our best clues, we have a clear idea here that God is speaking to someone and he says, let us make.

He doesn't say, I will now make man in my image and after my likeness. He is apparently addressing someone. And there is sort of a common interpreted idea that says, well, we have to look at this scripture the way the original recipients looked at it.

We need to put ourselves in Hebrew's garb back in the days of Moses to understand what this verse means. Well, that implies that God had no foresight. He didn't take us into account when he set the scriptures down and that we're not allowed to take advantage of any of our advantages of having the rest of scripture and so on.

I personally don't subscribe to that. I think we need to take advantage of everything that God has given us and we have illumination that the Old Testament saints didn't necessarily have. And so it is fair for us to see here several things.

First of all, we know that there are three persons in the Trinity. It's explicit in scripture. We know that one of those persons has been mentioned explicitly in this context.

Who is that? Which of the three members of the Trinity has already been mentioned by name in Genesis chapter 1? Specifically, verse 2. God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit. Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Now, based on what we know of the persons of the Trinity and their functions, who do you think is speaking when we have recorded the words, let there be and let us make? Who do you think is the speaker, the initiator of these actions? Well, we have to think about this a little bit.

Let's think about the Trinity for a moment. I'm not prepared to present that document this morning.

But in your view, who is the planner? Who is it that assigns roles and functions? To whom have the two other members of the Trinity voluntarily subordinated themselves? It's the Father. Who is the person who executes the Father's plan in voluntary submission and is the revealed member of the Trinity? God the Son. Who is it that provides the operating power and the context in which these things take place? God the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit is felt but not seen as a general rule. Jesus Christ is both seen and felt. God the Father is neither seen nor felt.

There have been comparisons made to properties of light and so forth in that regard. But God the Father is pictured as dwelling in unapproachable light in the third heaven. We are given access to the Father through Jesus Christ.

We are said to be in Jesus Christ. He is seen here on earth. His indwelling presence can be felt.

God the Holy Spirit is a presence He has never been seen but He is felt. You just talk to Nicodemus and John 3 about the Spirit and those who are born of the Spirit. The Spirit goes where He wills.

He speaks and you hear the sound of His voice but you don't see where He came from and where He goes. So with those ideas in mind, this statement in verse 26 is not yet a created act, is it? This is the expression of a plan. God says, let us do something.

Here is the plan. We are going to make man in our image and after our likeness. But this speech is one of the first that doesn't immediately bring something about.

God says this and then it is brought about. He is apparently speaking to the other members of the Trinity. He says, let us make man in our image and after our likeness.

Let us assign him a function of dominion and supervision and authority over everything else that has been made. Then in verse 27 we have the resulting creative act taking place which will be amplified and fleshed out in the next chapter. So now with all of those hints, if you will, who do you think is speaking in the first part of Genesis 1-26? I think this is God the Father.

He is the one that determines the plan which is then executed by the Son. The plan of the Father is executed by the Son and by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the expression of God's operating power.

He is the one that sustained the humanity of Jesus Christ. He is here operating without the benefits of his own deity. He has left us that same divine operating power to live our lives.

Following his example and fulfilling the plan of the Father. So this isn't necessarily something to die for but it does remind us and help us to review and think about this plural. God introduces

this on purpose.

He could have said, he could have maintained himself as a unity the way he has been presented in these first several verses. But he intentionally and emphatically introduces the idea of his plurality here. Because he repeats the plural pronoun here three times.

Let us make man in our image according to our likeness. And yet we have the unity of God emphasized again in verse 27. So God as a unity created man in his image.

In the image of God he created man. And so we for a moment have a close up of what is going on in the Godhead. And it's another emphasis on the importance in God's plan of the creation of man.

There may have been some, as it were, a divine conference on how the works would be organized. Is it going to be square or sphere? Is it going to revolve and rotate? How will we plan and execute these various things? There may have been similar plan expressed by the Father and carrying out of that by the Son and by the Spirit. And yet we are not given that close up view as we are here on day six in the creation of man.

Now why is that important? We see that and we observe that. You've got your three broad elements that we apply when we come to the Bible of observation, interpretation, and application. We observe here that suddenly there is a change in expression.

We have the plural of God and yet we have the unity emphasized. Our interpretation of that is that this is the members of the Trinity involved and that we need to see them in terms of their function. What is the application? Why is that important to us? Well, we're going to see that first of all this helps us out when we come to the image of God and the likeness of God.

But secondly, if we step back and think about the book of Genesis, which we have undertaken to study, what is the emphasis of this book? Because if we understand God's purpose and God's emphasis in this book, it helps us to see the function of each part of it. We're here in this first section and this first section is doing something. It's introducing and preparing us for the message of the book.

It's not just, well, I think I'll give you a little short account of how everything got here. God could have stopped it partway through Genesis chapter 2 and just had it on a little separate book. Here's the creation book.

But this is a part of the book of Genesis as a whole. If you remember, when we reviewed the structure and the content of Genesis, how much of Genesis is devoted to this creation account versus how much of Genesis is devoted to the story of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph? Well, we've got 50 chapters in Genesis, right? We've got 45 or so of them devoted to that story of God's interaction, God's covenant, God's blessing, God's defining a purpose, an assignment, a function to these particular men who are marked out. Abraham gets out from his nation and his kindred to go to the place that God directs.

So this book is ultimately pointing us toward the interaction between God and man. That's what the book is about. Here's the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God, and here's man on earth.

What's the nature of the relationship between the two? What are we supposed to do about the fact that there is a God and that he is our creator? Well, the bulk of Genesis devotes itself to answering that question. This section, even these accounts of the created days, are not there just to give us an explanation of where things came from. It is an account that culminates in the creation of man, and everything else is related to man.

Why are there periods of light and darkness? Is that just a convenient way to organize the matter and energy in the universe? What did it say in verse 14 in Genesis 1 about light and darkness? Let there be light in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the light, and let them be for signs and seasons and days and years. Think about your pets. All of us at one time or another have had a pet.

Is there any significance other than perhaps the type of activity they engage in? Do they have any concept of days? Do they have any concept of years? Do they have a concept of seasons? Do they know that, well, it is chilly now, but it will be warm in a few months, or it is warm now and it will be chilly in a few months? Do they derive any sort of significance, i.e., do they see a sign in the celestial movements that define our seasons and our days? They don't. It is for our benefit that these things take place. Even the creation of light and darkness and the functions of the luminaries are aimed at man.

It is for man. Days and years, signs and seasons affect man and man only as far as conscious perception of their significance and their meaning. The animals just cope with whatever comes along.

They are programmed to do certain things in the day and certain things at night, but they attach no significance to that. They can't predict. No animal ever made a calendar.

No animal ever observed an anniversary. No animal ever looked at creation and said, you know, there must be an organizer. I see organization and there must be someone who organized it, because this flies in the face of the nature of things where they tend to fall apart.

And here are things that are coming together in an organized fashion. That means something. There is an intelligence and an ordering power behind these things.

That means something to us. So the application of this specifically, which again is important when we come to the image and likeness idea, is God is up to something here with man. God has a purpose and something that he wants to communicate to us in this account, not just to answer a question.

How did everything get here? Where did it come from? We are to attach significance. We are to find meaning in these things. So when God says, let us make man in our image according to

our likeness, let them have dominion, we are finding out something not only about God and about how things got here, but about his purpose in bringing all of this into existence.

And as we start looking at the details of verse 26, we are going to see exactly what that is. First of all, having noted the plural here and that it is specifically introduced. God could have introduced this plural in another verse, couldn't he? He could have done it back on day four or day five.

But it is introduced in the very sentence where he is talking about man being created in his image and after his likeness. Well, what does that tell us just by observation? Well, God is complex. God is not simple in the sense of having an elemental structure that is quickly observable, quickly dismissible.

There it is. It is all gold or it is all silver or it is all one entity. God is complex.

God is a unity, but he is also a plurality. There is a complexity in God. There is conversation that goes on inside God's unity.

He says, let us make. And we are made in that image. And it tells us that we are complex.

That there is a sort of plurality within us. And we will see as we go along what the nature of that is. But we are not two-dimensional.

We are three-dimensional. There is a fullness about us that is separate and distinct from the rest of creation. Nothing else in creation is identified with God and related to God in this way.

Not the animals, not the birds, not the fish. Only man. That also contributes to our understanding of what it means to be in the image and after the likeness of God.

Because all we have to do is compare ourselves to the rest of creation. How is man different than a fish or a bird? You may think, well, that is absurd. Obviously, if I compare myself to the mudfinch out here in the backyard, I can see a profound difference.

But this has more significance when you start thinking about recent areas of investigation like the research they do with chimpanzees and orangutans and primates. The research that they do with dolphins and the evidence of the dolphins' intelligence in terms of community and the influence that there is a higher order of self-awareness and comprehension and so forth. There is a line and there is a distinction between man and creation that is absolute, that is quantum magnitude greater and qualitatively different than anything in creation.

They're never going to find a soul in a dolphin. They're never going to find self-awareness and self-consciousness in a chimpanzee. Anything that we do find there is by definition not unique.

The things that we find that are not unique are not the image of God. It's the unique things about mankind that we look to to find the image and the likeness of God. What is it that distinguishes man? Well, we are, first of all, sentient.

We are self-aware. We have what has been called higher consciousness. We can think.

We can plan. We can anticipate. We can contemplate.

We assign significance and meaning to things, and that's a qualitative difference from the animal. I know they've got, even through the chimps and some of these others, that they've taught sign language and they've read deep things into some of the quote-unquote conversations that they have had with chimps and with dolphins. A long, long time ago when personal computers first started coming out and they were still, by our modern standards, slow and very limited in their function, people would write programs that would write poetry.

I don't know if you ever saw these, but it was sort of a – you'd give it a database of words and phrases and then write an engine that would randomly assemble these pieces into something approximating stanzas and some sort of a poetic prosody. Then they would take these poems and read them. When a human being would read these, it was quite significant.

It made a funny kind of sense. Well, that same – obviously nobody assumed that the computer had taken on a creative, sentient life of its own. It was just a happy coincidence that some of these things made a dinky kind of sense.

Well, the same principle is at work in some of these other things. The Bible tells us that dolphins and chimps and orangutans are qualitatively different. They are not made in the image of God.

We are. There is an eternality and a level of responsibility and awareness that we have that is completely transcendent of anything else in creation. This has widespread consequences, ranging from the ideas about ecology and the environment and animals that are in the environment and their rights and so forth to flying saucers and Arizona and all of these other crazy things.

Well, there must be other life in the universe and so forth. Well, Scripture makes no allowance for that. There is only one creature in the universe that is said to be made in the image and after the likeness of God.

This does not even apply to the angels. Now, we don't know what their image and likeness might be. We do know that Scripture does not make this statement about them.

In fact, it says relatively little about them. But other than the angelic creation and humanity, the Bible allows for no other sentient life in the universe, and that's good enough for me. Whatever people think about flying saucers and little green men and so forth, whatever they think about chemical traces that they have found in Mars, that there must be organic life up there and so forth, makes no difference.

This is what the Bible says, and it is unique. God says, let us make man in our image. The word image here is the word tselem, T-S-E-L-E-M.

This is a fascinating word. It is derived from a very primitive root, and depending on how you want to look at the whole science of etymology and so forth, there are several related words that have this core of T-S-L. T-S is a single letter in Hebrew.

Tselem begins with that letter. Tzadeh, T-S-A-D-E, is the first letter. And then you have the letter L. Most verbs in Hebrew have a three-consonant structure.

So, for example, the verb that is related to this noun is tsalal, T-S-A-L-A-L. But the root here, the primitive root, is T-S-L. Tsel or tsal, whichever way you want to look at it.

It is very fascinating because there are some words in Hebrew and Aramaic related to this. The word tsel by itself, T-S-E-L, is a noun that means shadow. Well, what is a shadow? A shadow is cast when you have more or less a point source of light and something that intervenes or interrupts the path of that light so that an outline is cast on some surface.

And it is the idea of that outline that is in view in the root of that word. So, in terms of shadow, there is an image, an outline, that is cast. We used to have these guys on the Ed Sullivan Show and so forth Everybody can make a dog and a flying bird and that sort of thing and get a lamp.

Kids were famous for doing this when they would stay overnight at somebody else's house. They would get a light or a flashlight and make shadow pictures on the wall. We used to have entertainment where they would take puppets and they had the shadow box where they would tell a story and have these images cast on the screen in shadow form, in silhouette, if you will.

And that's the idea in itself, this root, is the idea of the outline. And by observing that outline, you figure out what's casting the shadow. It's not the shadow itself that's important.

The shadow tells you what it is that cast that shadow. It refers back to the real thing. You are very familiar with a verse that contains this root word without really perhaps realizing it.

Think about Psalm 23. Where does the idea of shadow occur in Psalm 23? Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Not commonly known, but the word you would expect in English to have shadow of death.

You have a prepositional phrase with a separate noun and preposition and you have the word shadow. But in Hebrew, this is all one word. And there's some controversy over whether the word death is even there.

Because the word is Tselanet or Tselmawet, depending on how you vocalize it in Hebrew. But this would be T-S-E-L-M-A-W-E-T. Tsel plus mit.

The Hebrew word for death is mit. M-U-T. So you have T-S-E-L and then you have M-W-T or M-U-T.

But this last part of the word can also be a slightly different word in Hebrew that intensifies the word that came before. So it would be, rather than the shadow of death, it would be deep

shadow or intense shadow. And scholars in Hebrew are sort of evenly divided.

If you look in RSV, for example, you'll find that although out of deference to the King James, they leave it in the text and say the valley of the shadow of death. They have a text note at the bottom that says or the valley of deep shadow. And several of your English translations will just come right out and say deep shadow instead of shadow of death.

But what's the idea? It's what would the shadow of death be? It would be awareness of death, the possibility of death. It doesn't mean you are dead or you're not going to be walking, are you? This is the shadow of death, the valley where death is on your mind, where death is present as a possibility. And the shadow, I think everybody at some time or another has been swimming and then you lay out beside the pool or on the beach or whatever and it's kind of shining full in your face and you have your eyes closed.

Then all of a sudden a shadow crosses your face. You see a reduction in the intensity of the light. Well, you open your eyes to see what casts that shadow.

What is that? Something here that wasn't here a minute ago. And so a shadow makes you aware of what it is that's casting that shadow. And that's the idea.

This word phelan occurs 16 times in the Old Testament. Five times it refers to man being in the image of God. And we have two or three of those here in Genesis.

We have it reflected a few other places in Scripture. We also have the Aramaic equivalent of phelan used in Daniel. As you may know, Daniel contains some portions that are in Aramaic which is a cousin of Hebrew, both derived from the same primitive language.

Aramaic was the language of commerce and culture, the language of the court in the later days of the ancient Near East. And Daniel, of course, being in captivity in Babylon, this was the language that was spoken. And there are portions of Daniel in our Old Testament that are actually in Aramaic rather than Hebrew.

In Daniel 2 and 3 we have the Aramaic equivalent of phelan used. If you were with us for our study of 1 Samuel 6, you remember that when the arch, remember Eli and his sons, and God appears to Samuel and says, there's only come to a bad end, I will honor those who honor me and those who despise me I will lightly esteem. And he basically pronounces judgment on Eli and his sons.

Shortly thereafter, Israel goes out to fight and loses the battle. The Ark of the Covenant is captured. And the story of the Philistines and what they try to do with the Ark in 1 Samuel 6. And you have them being afflicted with all kinds of diseases.

Their fish god falls and gets his hands and neck broken and so forth. So they keep sending the Ark to somewhere else in the Philistine Empire. Well, let's send it over to here and let's send it over to there.

And every place it goes bad things happen. And pretty soon the whole region is afflicted with tumors, these horrendous growths that appear on their bodies and this terrible blight, physical disease hits them. And they're overrun with rats and mice and their grain and crops and all the attendant disease that comes along with that.

And so they're trying to figure out what to do and they say, well, what we'll do is let's send this thing back to the Israelites and let's offer an offering. And so they say in their pagan ideas of worship, it was common to make an image of the thing that you're trying to purge out of the land. So they make images of the rats and the tumors out of gold and send these back to Israel accompanying the Ark.

They put it on a new cart and they let the ox go that's driving it with its calf and so on and it wanders back to Israel under God's direction. But the idea that we're focusing on in 1 Samuel 6 is these images of the rats and the tumors, the word used there is *selam*. It's a representation.

It's a model. It's an outline, a casting, if you will, of the tumor. Can't imagine what that would have looked like.

And the rats, little creature with a tail and ears and a nose and so forth, they made these out of gold and sent them back with the Ark. And these are referred to as *selam* in 1 Samuel 6.5 and again in 6.11. And this is a word commonly translated nine or ten times in the Old Testament. It is translated idol.

The theological word book of the Old Testament, which is sort of a magnum interpretive dictionary put together by some of the foremost Hebrew scholars in the world like Bruce Waltke, says that *selam* is image, specifically image as a representation of deity. This is its basic function, its basic meaning in the Old Testament. It's an image that represents deity.

And this is important because as such, an image that is a representation of a deity, this is what's forbidden in the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. It's not no sculpture, no physical representation of a thing, which is what it came to mean quickly in Israel.

But this means no idol. We know, for example, in the tabernacle and on the Ark of the Covenant itself and in the curtains of the tabernacle, there were woven images and there were golden cherubim, physical representations of heavenly creatures. And if God had said, don't make any graven image, they could have never finished the Ark of the Covenant because it's got these two big cherubs on the top.

They are woven into the fabric of the curtains, their image. And he says, thou shalt not make any graven image. Well, what about the pomegranates and the other representations in the seven-branched menorah and so forth? That wasn't what God had in mind in the Second Commandment.

It is an image, it's a *telem*, it's an image that represents a deity that is viewed as being the

shadow or the representation of some imagined God or even God Himself. We're not to set up a golden calf and say, this is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt, as the Israelites did right there at the foot of the mountain. Turn with me to Psalm 8. This is a very well-known, familiar psalm.

You can scan down through the first few verses there, but look at verse 5. He starts in verse 4. What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands.

You have put all things under his feet. This is the idea of image of God. It is the idea of dominion.

It's the idea of representation. The things that God created through His own voice, the works of His own hand, He has put under man's authority. Man is to stand in, if you will, for God in terms of rulership and dominion over these things.

He has been crowned with glory and honor. This is the glory and honor that attach to God. You have this same idea in Deuteronomy 4.15-19. Deuteronomy 4.15-19. Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth.

And take heed lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the hosts of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage." Reference back to our fourth day. This is the idea implicit in the passage, is don't make an image that you are going to worship, that you're going to view as being the Selem of a deity. Well, we'll pause here and take our break, and when we come back, we'll contemplate briefly what that means when it says that we are the Selem of God himself.

Let's pause here and take our break.