

97-09-14b

We resume now our study in Genesis, picking up in Genesis chapter 2, verses 1 through 3. In the New King James, this particular section is labeled God's Seventh Day Rest, or Sabbath, it has in parentheses. We do have the first occurrence of the Hebrew word Shabbat, S-H-A-B-A-T, which is a verb which means to rest, to cease from work. In some cases it means cease to be, or put an end to something.

You can Sabbath something and it ceases to be. But in Genesis chapter 2, Thus the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

This is one of the types of construction that has been parodied and fun has been poked at the King James for its repetition. But there is a reason why these things are repeated, and it is often for emphasis. Keep in mind, as we talked about in the close of our previous session, that a lot of these ideas were new and unexpected, and contrary to the popular wisdom and popular belief in other cultures especially, in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, in Egypt.

They had a completely different cosmology, a completely different idea of where things came from, and what the driving forces in the universe and in nature were. And so what is it that God emphasizes here, not only to his people, but to all people? The heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished by God. They are his work which he has done, and he is going to rest from all the work which he has done.

You can't get around the fact that the Bible assigns God the role of creator and originator of all things. Any authority in this universe is delegated from God, is permitted by God. Any activity that takes place, any life that exists, anything that happens, anything that is done in the universe, goes back and has its source in God.

The worst, fallen, reprobate, sinning unbeliever that ever lived can't escape the fact that he exists, because God performed the actions recorded in chapter 1 in those first six days. And it creates an inescapable responsibility to God. We are accountable.

We can't say, well, even if there is a God and even if he did create me, that's all well and good, but I really need to go my own way. The sovereignty, the personal self-determination, being captain of one's own ship and master of one's own fate, is a delegated authority. It is permitted, it is assigned by God.

And in the very act of exercising that personal sovereignty, you're exercising a God-given ability. And if it's given by God and if its purpose and its limits have been assigned by God, you cannot escape responsibility to God in the way that we exercise that. We are in his image and after his likeness.

The ability to think and the ability to decide, the ability to exist and to control anything in our environment, is given to us by God. And any exercise of that authority makes us accountable to God. And in the very act of rebellion, in the very act of rejecting God's authority and God's place in our lives, we are exercising God-given abilities.

And in the act of exercise, we are accountable for those decisions. It's just inescapable. And that's the emphasis in this chapter.

You can't move, you can't breathe, you can't think or decide without making yourself accountable to God because all of those actions come from God. And all of those abilities have been given by God for a purpose. And if you use them for some purpose other than what God has assigned, you're accountable and there will be a judgment.

So, right at the beginning, in this creation account, where you think, well, it's nice to know where the plants and animals came from, in that account, we have life-changing truth. We have something that applies to us every day. It's something to think about.

The very act of taking a breath makes me accountable to God because it's God that gave me that breath. The very act of thinking and deciding makes me accountable to God because that ability is a part of my image and likeness of God. And it comes from God and it was given for a purpose.

That's why you have this emphasis as this creation week is summed up. The heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished. Everything came from the plan of God, the voice of God, the creative action of God.

And on the seventh day... Now, this says on the seventh day. How many days in history have there been? Six. Each day God did something.

God performed work. Now, we tend to think, well, if you're omnipotent, nothing is really work. But this passage says that God worked.

God rested and ended his work. And this is the common word for work. It's the same word that is used for work that humans engage in.

Nothing special about it. It doesn't say he ended his creation. He ended bara, which we know is a verb that means to create and only has God as its subject in the Old Testament.

It doesn't say he ended his creation. It says he ended his work. Why does it use that common verb for work? Well, we are created in the image and likeness of God.

And we see a pattern in God's action that affects us. On the seventh day God ended his work which he had done. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made. You have both bara and asah there at the end of verse 3. Bara, the word that we know, again, only has God as its subject. We think of this as create, ex nihilo, create from nothing.

Nothing is there and God speaks and suddenly something is there. It's not a process of manufacture. Then you have the second verb asah.

Bara, of course, B-A-R-A. Asah, A-S-A-H, which is the common word for manufacture, to make something, normally out of materials that are available. It says that God both created and made.

Why does it say that? Well, think back to day six especially. God makes the animals and they come from the earth. Let the earth bring forth animals.

We're going to see in Genesis chapter 2 that God is going to manufacture man. He doesn't say let there be man and there was man. He manufactures man from the dust of the ground.

The animals are said to have been made from the dust of the ground. The fish and birds are said to be the product of the sea. In chapter 1, we're going to see that the birds are said to be the product of the ground.

In chapter 2, we have to figure that out when we get there. But God blessed the seventh day, sanctified it, hallowed it. We have the Hebrew verb here, kadash, Q-A-D-A-S-H.

The adjective holy is kadosh, which comes from this verb. Which is Q-A-D-O-S-H. But this, of course, is going to be a very common word.

That which is sanctified, that which is hallowed or declared holy. Well, this is the first thing that is declared holy. The first thing that is sanctified is this seventh day.

Now, I'm going to offer you a thought here. It may be self-evident to you, or it may strike you as something you hadn't thought of. I had not thought of this, really.

When I read this account, God rests on the seventh day, sanctifies it, declares it holy. I'm thinking, well, okay, you've got Sunday through Friday as the first six days. And then you've got Saturday, which is the Sabbath, the seventh day.

And from this point forward, every Saturday is a holy day. And, of course, you have that carried through in the Law of Moses, where they rest themselves on the seventh day. It isn't what it says here, is it? It doesn't say God sanctified and hallowed every seventh day.

He sanctified and hallowed the seventh day. This one day, this first day where God does no work, is a hallowed and sanctified day. It's the ending day of the first week of history.

That first day is hallowed and sanctified. It doesn't say anything about next Saturday, the first Saturday of Adam and Eve in the Garden. I guess it would actually be the second Saturday, because they're there for this day.

But it doesn't say that there was a Sabbath observance that began at this point. It doesn't say anything about Adam and Eve observing the Sabbath. It doesn't say anything about Cain and Abel, or Seth, or Noah, or Methuselah, or any of the other early people.

You don't have any more mention of the Sabbath until you get down to the time of Moses. You don't have any Sabbatarianism until you get to the Law. And that's significant, because, again, we're in the overture.

We're in the theme introduction phase of the Bible, and of the book of Genesis, and of the Pentateuch. And this one day is sanctified and hallowed. This doesn't say anything about a week's future, or two weeks' future, or any of the other Saturdays to come in the early history of mankind.

It's just this one day. So, God blessed that day. Now, how do you bless a day? God blessed the birds and the fish.

God blessed man, be fruitful and multiply. God put a blessing on them. God said, prosperity be upon you, and so forth.

How do you bless a day? I'm open to suggestions. How do you bless a day? How do you hallow a day? How do you declare a day holy? Yes, I guess you could raise your hand over the calendar. God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Well, the answer, or a clue at least, is in verse three. Why does God sanctify and hallow this day? Because in it, He rested. Now, it doesn't say, now, next Saturday, I want you to rest, and that'll be a holy day, too.

This day is hallowed and sanctified because in it, God rests. Now, has God been resting ever since? Was that the start of a big, long rest for God? He worked for six days, and now the rest of history, He's just got a big Sabbath going. Well, what do you think? God spoke everything into existence.

God ordained all of the cycles, and God issued the divine decrees, if you will, and then God had no further need to do anything. Well, as we will see throughout the rest of the Bible, it is as Jesus said. On the Sabbath, when Jesus healed, and they came up and said, Why are you doing these things on the Sabbath? Jesus said, My Father is working, and I am working.

Jesus said, The Father is working. That's good enough for me. It's not an ever-ongoing Sabbath.

Now, that's important because this one day, God rested, and God sanctified and hallowed and blessed that day. Well, Sunday morning, guess what? God went back to work. God is engaged.

God is involved in human history. Now, you may think that that's self-evident and that that's not a big point, but there's a lot of theology that views God as distant, as uninvolved, as having wound up the clock and gotten it ticking and then stepping back and just letting the thing run. That's not the biblical view of God.

It's this one day where God rested. God reserved an entire day where he did nothing but look at the perfection of what he had accomplished in the previous six days, and he did nothing on that day. It doesn't mean that he no longer engages in history.

It doesn't mean that he's distant. He is imminent. He is involved.

He is personal. He does things. And the Pentateuch is a very fertile place of investigation to see the activity of God, the unfolding of his plan, the active involvement that he has in human history.

And there's an application of that for us. God is involved with us. God is not passive.

God is not distant. God doesn't say, well, you know, it's all in my word. Just look it up, and that'll take care of you.

God is personal. God is immediate. God is involved.

He is an active person. He is not an impersonal, inactive force. He didn't just give the push to human history and then stand back and watch it go.

And it may seem like a simple point, but there are times when we think like the psalmist in Psalm 74. Where are you, God? Is your hand resting in your bosom? Take your right hand out of your bosom and act with it. Well, that's a prayer we can pray, because God is an active God.

We don't have to say, oh, God, I sure hope in your divine decrees in eternity past you provided a solution for this problem. Because I know that you're basically having a Sabbath up there now. That's not the case.

God is active. God will act. God will step in.

God will intervene. God will change things, because he's personal, and he's immediate, and he cares for us. Why is it we cast our cares on God? Because he cares for us.

And that doesn't mean care in the sense of I don't care or I do care. That's care in the active sense of this is like hospice care or infant care or retirement care. You don't say, boy, I really care about those old people, and I sure do care about those infants.

In the sense of concern, this is an active provision, an active meeting of needs. And when it says casting all your cares on him, for he careth for you, he is our caretaker, and he acts. He's not resting today.

God has only rested on one day in human history, and this is it, the seventh day. And this is going to introduce a theme that is going to be developed when you get to the law of Moses and Sabbath observance. And when you get to the Ten Commandments, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh is a day of rest. Why? Because, and it refers back to this passage, in six days God created the heavens and the earth.

And on the seventh he rested, and it's a past tense. It doesn't say he began to rest with the result that he continues to rest forever. He rested on that one day.

And we are to meditate, Israel was encouraged to meditate on the Sabbath, on God. God acted and then God rested, and then God began to act again. And the Sabbath is a day to reflect on God's activity and on our place in his plan.

Our cessation from work is a reminder that God is at work, and Jesus pointed that out. So this is a very good little section of three verses to meditate on. It's not just a historical record, it has application to us.

And this ends the first section of Genesis. In a way it is the anti-climax of this section, the climax being day six. But as you know, if you study literature at all, the meaning of the climax in a story is fleshed out and signified in the anti-climax, in that which follows.

What is the result of the climax of the story? Well you find that out in what you technically call the anticlimactic section of a novel or a play. The great denouement, as the French term is for it. What happened as a result of this resolution of the conflict? What happened to the hero? What happened to the anti-hero? What happened to the other people involved in the plot? That comes out in what follows the climax.

Well, the seventh day is the anticlimactic, the resolution, the denouement of the week of creation. And what is it? The holiness of God, the omnipotence of God, the perfection of God and his work is observed. A lot of times when a disaster takes place, some great event impacts the psyche of people in the world, they'll pause and have a moment of silence.

They'll say, let's do this all around the world, let's pause. I believe they did this for Princess Diana recently in England. They had some period of silence throughout the country.

Well, this is God's period of silence to worship, to glorify. It is a holy day. It is a day that

was set apart for the angels and for man.

Remember, Adam is alive on the seventh day. Adam observes this holy day, this day of rest on God's part. This brings up a second point about this special Sabbath of God.

Let me ask you this. Man is here to appreciate and to glorify God as one of his primary functions. If I were God and I were going to have a creature appreciate my mighty acts and my character and so forth, what day would I create man on? I'd create him on day one.

I'd say, look, Adam, watch this. Let there be light. Watch this, Adam.

I'm going to separate the water from the water and make a sky. Watch this. I'm going to make the dry land appear.

This will really impress you. I'm going to create living things. Watch them.

They're going to spring right out of the ground. They're going to team in the waters of the primordial earth. Watch this.

I'm going to create the sun and the moon and the universe and the galaxies and the celestial bodies up here. He doesn't need an environment for Adam any more than he needed an environment for the angels or sun and moon to create light and darkness. Why is it that man sees nothing of God's acts of creation? God doesn't even see Eve.

I'm sorry, Adam doesn't even see Eve get created. Where is Adam when Eve is being formed from his rib? We're going to find out in chapter two. He's asleep.

He doesn't see it. Adam does not observe a single act in the six days of creation. God doesn't even save the animals and say, well, day six I'll create Adam and then I'll create the animals.

I'll let him see my creative act. Well, guess what? This is the first element of faith on man's part, isn't it? Because Adam has taken on faith that God is the creator, that God is who he says he is, that God originated these things, that God has the authority to give him authority and dominion because he hasn't seen it. He hasn't observed it with his own eyes, has he? And God could have organized that any way he wants.

Could have put him in a little space suit out there and let him watch the whole creation week and he doesn't. Well, there's a reason for that. What is the first day that Adam sees? What's Adam's first full day on the earth? God does nothing.

God's acts are finished. It's a holy day of observance of God's finished, perfected work. And Adam gets the story told to him of creation.

He didn't see it. He's not a witness. Adam did not write Genesis chapter one.

Well, why did God do that? Well, man begins, again, remember this is the overture. This is the place of introduction of themes. Man has to take this on faith.

Pretty soon, somebody's going to offer an alternate explanation of the relationship between God and man. Someone is going to offer a slightly different world view and universe view. Someone is going to say that which you believe is not exactly right.

And it is in the area of faith and in the area of belief that we fulfill our primary and greatest function in God's plan. And that is also the area of our failure. Our failure in the garden and our failure ever since.

Because we do not take on faith the truth that God communicates to us. We operate on some other premise. We accept some other reality.

We accept some other explanation than what God gives. And sometimes we say, well, you know, if I had been there, you know, if God would just show me one miracle. I used to think this when I was young.

I was kind of wondering, well, is God really there or is this just something that came down through my family? Lots of people have other religions. In fact, we had a question from one of our children just this past week in talking with one of her friends who observes a different religion. And he says, well, my God's name is this, and this is what we believe.

So our daughter came home and said, well, you know, how do we know what we believe is right and that they're not right and we're wrong? Pretty deep question for a seven-year-old. But we all have to ask ourselves that question at some point. How do we know that what we believe is true and that there's not some other explanation that really reflects reality? You know, God makes all kinds of promises and says, if you live your life in certain ways, this will be the outcome.

How do we know? Well, there is the introduction of that idea right here in the beginning of Genesis. Adam has to take creation on faith because he didn't see it. And we don't get to see things at first hand either.

And some people, even our senses can be fooled. We can think we saw something that we didn't. Just watch an episode or two of Perry Mason.

You see that illustrated all over the place. It sure looks, I mean, there's the fingerprints on the poker and there's the bashed in skull. And there's a witness that saw you running from the house.

Boy, they worked that plot to death. And things are not always as they appear to be. And even the evidence of the senses is not sufficient to convince us.

What about the Israelites? They did see the pillar of fire and the cloud of smoke. They did see the plagues in Egypt. They walked between the walls of water.

I am sure that Cecil B. DeMille hasn't even done justice to that episode. Walking across the Red Sea on dry ground. And these walls of water on either side.

And they conveniently collapse just when the Egyptian army tries to do the same thing. They saw these things. How many of them in that generation went into the land of Canaan and inherited the promises? Two.

Two out of what has been estimated to be as many as six million people. Two entered the land. Caleb and Joshua.

What does that tell us? It's not the evidence of the eyes that counts. It's the reality that we grab hold of by faith. And that idea is right here in Genesis chapter 1, Genesis chapter 2. Adam is created last.

And he takes his worldview on faith from God. And his downfall and the downfall of the whole race is going to be rejecting that truth for an alternate explanation. Going back to the question, how do we know that what we believe is true and that we haven't been fooled? Well, we have the answer in Genesis chapter 1. We are created in the image and after the likeness of God.

And we have the ability to recognize God if we're looking for him. There's been a lot of studies done on the human mind. And isn't it interesting? You think about all the people on the earth.

Just think about the metroplex here. We've got hundreds of thousands of people floating around in here. And we have the ability to distinguish every single one of them.

There are no two people that look exactly alike. You can even find somebody that has similar features. But as soon as they smile or as soon as they talk or as soon as they show their teeth, you say, oh, there's a difference.

We can discern the difference between identical twins if we know them well. As soon as you watch them, you see that, well, there's just a slight difference. This one has just a little bit broader forehead or there's a difference in their smile or there's a difference in their movement.

We have such a great ability to distinguish and to recognize persons. What can you do with the features of a face? You've got two eyes, a couple of eyebrows, a nose and a mouth and a chin, some cheeks. You've got the basic elements of a face.

And you would think, how many different ways can you arrange that? You've got millions of people. How are you going to make each face unique? But they are, aren't they? We

can recognize people even over time, even after they change, even after they grow up, maybe not right away. But we have the ability to distinguish persons when we know their features and their characteristics.

We have the ability to recognize God. We are made in His image and after His likeness. He has put the knowledge of Himself in our hearts.

Romans 1, God's presence is manifest. God's eternal Godhead and deity are manifest to every single one of us. And because of our origin and because of our makeup, because of the way we are created, we have the ability to recognize God.

And we're accountable to do that. And God is fair in holding us to account. We can't say, well, you know, you never showed yourself.

If you'd just done like you did for Stephen, part the skies and let us see your throne in Christ, then we would believe. If you'd do a miracle, if you would manifest yourself, God has done that. God has manifested Himself in the heart of every single one of us.

And we have the ability to recognize Him. And we have the ability to know the truth. Jesus didn't say, well, you may know the truth, and the truth might set you free.

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. We have a God-given ability to recognize God, and we can have confidence. And we are exhorted to not be strayed, to not be carried away by some false system of truth, some false worldview.

Remember in Colossians where we studied those things that are offered as alternatives, tradition, the commandments of men, human philosophies. That surrounds us. We are immersed in a culture that offers us an alternative worldview.

You're important if you're on TV. You're important and meaningful if you die young. Why is Elvis Presley the icon that he is? Why is Princess Diana the icon that she is? Why did they grudgingly televise the entire funeral of Mother Teresa on television? Significance is attached to people in this life for a lot of strange reasons.

Very seldom does it attach to them for a divine reason, for a biblical reason. That's why God constantly emphasizes the idea that this is a topsy-turvy world. The last shall be first.

The elder will serve the younger. God says your common worldview doesn't wash. There is a divine reality that transcends it, and that's what you need to live by.

That's what you need to pay attention to. That's what this account did in its time. It flew in the face of all of the cosmologies, all of the traditions, all of the understandings of where things came from and what was important.

People sacrificed children to get good crops, to get victory in battle. People did bizarre

rituals for fertility and to hope for a large family and a progeny and so forth. This account says that's a divinely assigned function.

That is going to happen because God says it's going to happen. We're going to see as we go through Genesis that even God's own people forget that sometimes. God reminds them.

They try alternative ways to make sure that they are fruitful and multiply. Think about Abraham. These are divinely ordained.

We don't want to forget the place of God in our life. It's not second. It's not corollary.

It's not an add-on. It's not an occasional thing. It's not what we do on the seventh day.

God is first. He is foremost. He is the author.

He is the finisher. He is the creator. This account, if it tells us nothing else, should tell us that there is no way around the central, primal place of God in our lives.

His word is law. His word happens. What he says comes to pass.

When he makes a promise, it absolutely is so. God said, let there be light and there was light. When God says, I will supply your needs, that's gospel.

That's truth. It's going to happen just like the sun rising and setting. When God rests from his work, it's because it is finished and it's perfect.

There is nothing else that needs to be done in that initial act of creation. There is quite a bit of superintending and quite a bit of subsequent activity that God is going to engage in. It is going to result in history.

There is going to be a dynamic relationship between God and man. When we pick up here in Genesis 2.4, this is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

He is not going to go on and say, now let me tell you how the sparrows started living and how the hummingbirds came to live the way that they do. Let me talk about the whales and here are the dinosaurs and so forth. Where does this account turn its attention? To the same place that you have emphasized in chapter 1, to man and man's interaction with God, man's relationship, man's responsibility.

The conversation, the tasks that come to hand from God. That is what the Bible is going to occupy itself with. That is what Genesis and the Pentateuch will occupy themselves with.

That is where this account turns. This is the history. These are the generations of.

The idea here that is translated history or generations. If you take the T off, you have the root word here, Yeled. Y-E-L-E-D.

This is the word that means to beget, to have offspring. When you get into the genealogies, which we will in Genesis, so and so begat so and so. It is from Yeled.

It says this is the result. This is the account of this person and his offspring. This person and his generations.

We have an introductory clause. There has been a lot of talk. Is this a conclusion or is this an introduction? This formula that we find spaced regularly through Genesis.

It is both. It serves as a colophon or as a summation of what has preceded. Moses, under divine inspiration here, also uses these as transitions.

They refer back to what has just been finished and they look forward to what is coming up. This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

Now the word day is used to sum up the entire week, isn't it? Because it talks about everything that God made. This, of course, is a way that day is going to be used in the future. The day of the Lord can refer to the tribulation period.

It can refer to the entire seven year period. It can refer to the millennial kingdom, which is a thousand years long. But this use of day for a more general period of time does not apply to chapter one.

Because chapter one explicitly defines these days as being set off by an evening and a morning. By the alternation of light and darkness, which is a 24 hour day. There is no way around it.

It is a 24 hour day. The evening and the morning. A first day.

A second day. God hallows the seventh day and he has one 24 hour period of rest. And when the sun goes down and comes up, and Sunday comes, first day of the next week, time marches on and things move forward.

And to see anything other than a 24 hour day is to fly in the face of what the scripture explicitly defines as a day. Here, the verse specifically tells us that this is the history of the heavens and the earth. This is an inclusio.

Heavens and earth, those are the boundaries. Everything in the heavens and the earth, God created them in that day, in that time. Now look at verse five.

Before any plant of the field was in the earth, and before any herb of the field had grown, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to

till the ground. Now this is kind of a bizarre thing to say. We've just had this grand creation account.

And didn't God create the shrubs and the vegetation and so forth? And didn't he give the grain and the fruit trees to man to eat? Well now, what's the story here? There is no plant of the field in the earth and there is no herb of the field growing because there was no rain and no one to till the ground. What on earth can you be talking about here? Well, first of all, when do we have rain and when do we have man tilling the ground? Later on, down the road. He says, this is before.

He says, I want to go back and tell you a story of how these things came to be. How did we get rain? How did we get man tilling the ground? We're starting a new chapter in the story. And the chapter break here is unfortunate.

The chapter breaks were put into the Bible in medieval times. There was no such thing in the Hebrew manuscripts. And the chapter 2 rightfully ought to start at verse 4. Perhaps even in the middle of verse 4, but certainly not where it does at 2.1. But we start a new chapter here.

This is the history of the heavens and the earth and the day the Lord God made them. Before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown, the Lord had not caused it to rain and there was no man to till the ground. In a broad sense, this is the introduction to the next section.

This next section is going to tell us how tilling the soil came about and where rain came from. So it's looking ahead. It's like a little mini overture here.

And he says, this day, this period of time is going to range over this whole area. And he says, before the plants were in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. Well, how did this come about? We're now going to go back and review because we know that in chapter 1, we know where the plants came from.

And there is a man available to till the soil. But this introduction tells us, okay, we got the big picture in chapter 1. Now we're going to go back and we're going to tell the story from a different perspective. It's been a lot of ink spilled saying, well, there are two creation accounts and they're not even from the same hand.

Two different people wrote them. This verse is very important. Verse 4 and 5 is critical because it introduces the next story.

And it tells us what it's about. It says, I'm going to go back to before the plants and before the man and before rain. And I'm going to tell you the story of how all these things came into being.

So we're going to back up now. We're going to reenter the creation week. And we're

going to see what happens on day 6 especially.

That's a clue. God puts these things. God is not a sloppy writer.

He's not a bad literary figure. God is the ultimate literarian. He is the best writer.

He is the greatest user of these forms. And he employs them to communicate. And the evidence is here.

We don't have to wonder and say, hmm, God created man in general and then he created a special man, Adam and Eve, after the creation week. Not at all. But that's a fairly commonly held view.

That that's where Cain got his wife. It's all these other people that God created. And they're the sons of men.

And this is going to be a son of God when we get to Genesis 6 and so forth. Not so. The Bible tells us, Genesis tells us, God tells us right here in these verses.

We're going to back up before the plants. Before the man to till the soil. Before rain.

And I'm going to tell you a story about how all these things came into being. Very common, by the way, in Hebrew and Semitic writing to give an overture and a preview of coming attractions and then go back and flesh out the story. Extremely common.

Only someone who is unfamiliar with ancient Near Eastern literature would make the mistake of thinking that these are sequential. Even Oriental literature does this. I'm going to tell you what I'm going to tell you.

Then I'm going to tell you in more detail. And later on I'll tell you what I told you. So that is going to introduce the conditions in the earth.

Before any plant of the field was in the earth. Before any herb of the field had grown. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth.

There was no man to till the ground. But a mist or a spring came up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. One spring, and this is probably a better translated spring than mist.

It has the idea of fresh water coming from underground in some fashion. It could have been a mist. It could have been a spring.

The word is used both ways. But there's fresh water emanating from the ground and watering the whole earth. Now we're going to have another introduction that we'll then step back and see it fleshed out in detail.

Look at verse 7. The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground. And breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living being.

That pretty well sums up the story, doesn't it? The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there he put the man whom he had formed. Well, we know that man was created on day 6. So we're back in day 6. And when God plants the garden and puts the man whom he had formed there.

Look at verse 9. Out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. And then we have the introduction of the tree of life. But we want to focus here on verse 7. The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.

Now earlier it just said let us make man in our image after our likeness. So God created man in his own image. And the idea is the purpose and the nature of man.

Now we get the mechanics. The verb here is *yatsar*. And we'll see this word in detail next time.

I will just pique your curiosity by telling you that *yatsar*, to form. If you make it a participle in Hebrew, it is the word for potter. When you go over to Jeremiah 18 and so forth, the potter and the clay.

Well that's a noun that is formed from this verb. One who forms. One who shapes with his hands.

That's the view of God we're going to see now. Much more personal than what we saw in chapter 1. Much more intimate and directly involved here than the general account we had in verse 1. And it's a reminder to us as we have seen throughout our two sessions this morning. That God is intimately involved with us.

We are central to his purpose. And everything that he has done is a setting and a context for us to fulfill our function. And we don't want to forget that in our daily life.

As we exercise our dominion. As we perform our tasks. As we live our lives and make our decisions.

The light that God spoke into existence ought to be shining in us and through us. The light of Jesus Christ. The light of God's presence.

The light that enables us to fulfill God's purpose. Nothing means anything if it doesn't relate to God's plan. What is the meaning? What is the point if it doesn't tie directly to God's purpose? That's what Genesis is introducing us to.

And that's what we find fleshed out throughout the Bible. Let's close in prayer. Father we thank you for our existence.

We thank you for the place that you have assigned us in your purpose and in your plan.

We thank you that as revelation unfolds it becomes clearer and more precise and detailed. What you have called us to.

What you are preparing us for. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will take these truths and use them to transform our thinking. To reshape our priorities and our viewpoint in life.

That we will see both ourselves and those around us. And our circumstances in life in general. From your perspective and from your viewpoint.

And that in so doing we will take advantage of all of the resources you have placed at our disposal. To live life in a way that pleases you and glorifies our Savior Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name.

Amen.