

The background of the entire image is a deep space photograph. It features a dense field of stars of various magnitudes, appearing as white and blue pinpoints of light. Interspersed among the stars are large, ethereal clouds of gas and dust, known as nebulae. These nebulae exhibit a rich palette of colors, including vibrant blues, purples, pinks, and magentas, with some darker, more opaque regions. The overall effect is a sense of vastness and cosmic wonder.

HUB LECTURES

**ALL THINGS
VISIBLE AND
INVISIBLE**

Colin Dye

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Hebrew-English by Christo van der Merwe, The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2004)

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THE HUB LECTURES

ALL THINGS
VISIBLE
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*I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible (Nicene Creed).*

STUDENT NOTES

THE HUB LECTURES 2024

Advanced Biblical Study

Interacting with the Scriptures to affirm a fully biblical worldview

PART ONE: All things visible and invisible

INTRODUCTION:

The Nicene Creed (Councils of Nicaea 325 & Constantinople 381) begins with:

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

Belief in the unseen realm is fundamental to the historic Christian faith. But the existence and role of the heavenly supernatural beings and their part in the government of the heavens over the earth is neglected and downplayed in much Evangelical theology. Bible translators and expositors often fail to do full justice to the supernatural worldview of the Scriptures and their Ancient Near Eastern cultural context.

LECTURE 1: The Supernatural Worldview of the Bible

Christianity is rooted in a supernatural worldview

- The existence of God
 - God is Spirit ie. a supernatural, non-physical being
 - Contrary to naturalistic worldview in which matter/energy (the physical world) is the ultimate reality and all that exists (or at least, the only world that we can be sure about and, therefore, all that really matters – matter is all that matters).
- Doctrines that necessitate the existence of a supernatural reality
 - God
 - Creation & Providence
 - The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures
 - Sacred History – flood, Exodus, wilderness wanderings etc.
 - Trinity
 - The incarnation
 - Virgin birth of Jesus
 - The divine and human nature of Jesus united in one Person
 - The miracles of Jesus (the Gospels)
 - The miracles of the Early Church (the book of Acts)
 - The Atonement
 - The Resurrection
 - The Second Coming
 - Angelology – the heavenly host, angels & demons, cherubim & seraphim, Satan, principalities and powers.

The Bible and the ANE

- The culture of the ancient near East
 - Belief in and interaction with a host of spiritual beings
 - The existence of many gods
 - Pantheons, usually with a chief god, as head
- This worldview is found in the Bible
 - The heavenly host, supernatural beings created by God
 - Divine council called, *elohim*, 'sons of God', 'heavenly beings' et. c.
 - But always a distinction between the eternal, uncreated God and all other created beings, including the heavenly host.
 - There is no pantheon in the biblical revelation
 - There is only one Yahweh, the God and Father of one Lord, Jesus Christ.
 - Other beings called *elohim* exist but they are always distinguished from *ha Elohim*, the One, True and Living God.

We must begin by reading the Bible through the eyes of a 1st Century Jew, that is, within the context of a thoroughly biblical worldview. Reading the text in its context – not just, grammatical, historical context – but in its full cultural and spiritual context, including the supernatural elements which are an inextricable part of it.

When you do this, the Bible comes alive in a new way, often strange, hard-to-understand or obscure passages suddenly begin to make sense.

For example,

- *Nachash* Gen 3;
- The *Nephilim* Gen 6:1-5;
- The *Satan* Job 1 & 2;
- The “gods” of Psalm 82; Psalm 89:5-18 (Hebrews 12:22);
- Biblical imagery – heavenly host, the natural world, chaos imagery: Psalm 68:4-18 (Matthew 16:18 & Ephesians 4:7-16); Psalm 135:1-15; Psalm 138:1-3; Isaiah 59:1 etc.
- References to “sons of god”: Genesis 6:1-5, Genesis 11:1-9; Deuteronomy 32:8-9,15-22; Psalm 82:1-8, cf. Psalm 89:5-8.

The story of the Bible comes together, the plan of God, to redeem humanity and to unite his heavenly sons and his earthly sons into one big family in the new heavens and the new earth.

In Genesis 1:1, the phrase “The heavens and the earth” means “the sky and the land”, everything visible (physical). But Job 38:7 shows the existence of spiritual beings prior to the creation of the earth.

Spiritual beings existed prior to the creation of the earth, who witnessed it.

Job 38:4-7

⁴“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ⁵Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ESV

וַיִּרְעוּ	בֹקֶר	כּוֹכְבֵי*	בְּרִנָּה
wăy·yā·rî'·û	bō'·qēr	kô'·k̄bê	b ^{er} rōn-yă'·hăḏ
וְ . רוע	בֹקֶר	כּוֹכֵב	בְּ . רנן . יחד
w · rw'	bō'·qēr	kô·k̄āb'	b · rnn · yă'·hăḏ
and · shout for joy	morning	star	when · sing · together
and · they shouted for joy	[the] morning	[the] stars of	when · singing · together
C · VcW3MP	NC-SA	NCMPC	P · VaF---C · NC-SA

אֱלֹהִים:	כָּל־בְּנֵי*
'ēlō·hîm'	kōl-b ^{en} '
אֱלֹהִים	כָּל . בֵּן
'ēlō·hîm'	kōl' · bēn'
God	all · son
God	all (of) · [the] sons of
NCMPA	NC-SC · NCMPC

In Job 38:7, the plural nouns are followed by plural verbs.

“the morning stars (kô·k̄āb' bō'·qēr) sang together and all the sons of God (bēn' 'ēlō·hîm) shouted for joy... [when (the LORD) laid the foundations of the earth].”

In particular, this shows *elohim* here refers to beings other than God (*bēn' 'ēlō·hîm*), to spiritual beings previously created by God.

“The LORD” in Job 38:1 is יהוה (YHWH)

God speaks in Job 38:4 “Where were you, when I laid the foundations of the earth...? In Job 38:1, we see that the person speaking is the LORD (YHWH): “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind...”

וַיֹּאמֶר׃	מִן־הַסְּעָרָה	אֶת־אִיּוֹב	וַיַּעַן־יְהוָה
wăy·yô(ʾ)·mārʾ	min·hās·sē·ā·rā(h)	ʾēt·ʾiyʾ·yôb	wăy·yāʾ·ʾān-yhwh
וְ אָמַר	אֶת־אִיּוֹב מִן־הַ סְּעָרָה		וְ עָנָה יְהוָה
w · ʾmr	minʾ · hăʾ · sē·ā·rāhʾ	ʾētʾ · ʾiy·yôbʾ	w · ʾnh · yhwh
and · say	from · the · storm	[obj] · Job	and · answer · Yahweh
and · he said	from · the · storm	[obj] · Job	and · (he) answered · Yahweh
C · VaW3MS	P · A · NCFSA	PO · NPMSA	C · VaW3MS · NPMSA

yhwh is God's name (Exodus 3:13-14). *yhwh* is *elohim* but no other *elohim* is *yhwh*. He is the supreme *elohim*. The word *elohim* refers to spiritual beings, those who inhabit the spiritual world as opposed to the physical world.

We tend to presume that the biblical writers thought about ʾelōhîm in the same way we think about capitalized G-o-d. When we see the word “God,” we instinctively assign a unique set of attributes (e.g., omnipresence, omnipotence, sovereignty) to the letters G-o-d. But this presumption is incorrect and leads our thinking astray when we encounter instances where ʾelōhîm is intended to describe a group of beings instead of the lone God of the Bible. (Heiser, *Angels*, p. 11)

This distinction between spiritual beings and people with bodies is also seen in the NT. God is a spiritual being, not an embodied physical being:

John 4:24

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.
ESV

The principalities and powers are spiritual in nature, and not flesh and blood, not people with bodies:

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ESV

There are six uses of the word *elohim* in the Hebrew Bible, each referring to an inhabitant of the spiritual world or a disembodied spiritual being.

SIX USES OF ELOHIM IN THE HEBREW BIBLE (HEISER, JESOT 1:1)

There are six figures or entities referred to as אלהים “gods”) in the Hebrew Bible:

- A. Yahweh, the God of Israel (over 2000 times)
- B. The divine beings of Yahweh's heavenly council (Ps 82; Ps 89; cf. Deut 32:8–9, 43 [with LXX, Qumran])
- C. The gods of foreign nations (e.g., 1 Kgs 11:33)
- D. “Demons” (שדים; Deut 32:17)
- E. The disembodied human dead (Samuel's spirit, 1 Sam 28:13)
- F. The Angel of Yahweh (Gen 35:7) [See Gen 32:30; Gen 35:1]

Lesser *elohim* and the creation

Genesis does not specifically mention the creation of the lesser *elohim*, but the references to the heavens and the celestial bodies (Gen 1:1,8,14-17) assumes their existence. The Near Eastern peoples associated the heavenly bodies with spiritual beings. And their presence becomes explicit in the creation of humanity.

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶Then God (*’ēlō·hîm*) said (singular), "Let us make (plural) man¹ (*ādhām*) in our image, after our likeness (plurals). And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷So God (*’ēlō·hîm*) created man (*ādhām*) in his own image, in the image of God (*’ēlō·hîm*) he created him; male and female he created them. ESV

Who do the plurals in Genesis 1:26 refer to?

Bible interpreters suggest 3 main options:

1. The Trinity – Father, Son & Holy Spirit
2. Plural of Majesty – showing exalted nature of God
3. Spiritual Beings – the created heavenly sons of God.

It cannot be (1), *the Trinity*, as there would be no need for God to announce to the other members of the Trinity his intention to create humanity. They are omniscient. Also, the Trinity, though rooted in OT teaching, is a NT doctrine. Unlike the NT, the OT does not use Trinitarian phrases such as, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit". We cannot read trinitarian teaching into OT passages such as Genesis 1:26. It's wrong to import a meaning into a text foreign to its context.

Furthermore, references to the other *elohim* in the OT show these beings to be lesser than God. To apply plural *elohim* to the members of the Trinity could lead to a false understanding of what the Trinity actually is. Correctly understood, the doctrine teaches that God is One Being eternally existing in three co-eternal and co-equal persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we must ask ourselves how the plurals in Genesis 1:26 would have been understood by the people of the time. The belief in divine councils was part of the culture of the ANE. This would be the immediate interpretative context of an ancient Israelite reading of Genesis 1:26. However, the contrast between Yahweh's Council and the pagan pantheistic divine councils is also stark. The Genesis accounts are monotheistic. The uniqueness of *Yahweh/Elohim* as creator and sovereign shows he is incomparably above other spiritual beings (other *elohim*).

¹*ādhām* is a generic term, meaning 'humankind'

It cannot be (2), *the plural of majesty*, as “the we of majesty does not exist in Hebrew” (Joüon & Muraoka 2006: *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, §114eN). There is a plural of majesty for nouns, but Genesis 1:26 it not about nouns. It is about verbs – the first person plural form of the verb, עָשָׂה (‘āśâ), “Let us make”.

In the Hebrew language, some singular nouns have a dual ending (-im). For example, there is only one Jerusalem (y^rûšālayim) but this noun has a dual ending. The Hebrew word for water (mayim) also has a dual ending and the context decides whether it is translated as a singular or plural. For example, in Numbers 24:7 the ESV translates *mayim* as “many waters” (plural), whereas the Hebrew text literally reads “much water” (singular).

For more discussion see below:

Plural of excellence or majesty

...the plural form of nouns (instead of pronouns) may have several meanings besides the simple meaning of “more than one”. Joüon & Muraoka list a great number of nuances of the plural (§136):

- Plural of extension: שָׁמַיִם *šāmayim* (sky, heavens), because the heavens are composed of multiple parts
- Plural of composition: דָּמִים *dāmim* (bloods > bloodshed)
- Plural of intensity: בְּהֵמוֹת *Bəhēmōt*, for its greatness
- Plural of abstraction: בַּטְחוֹת *batṭuḥōt* (security, from sure circumstances)

(The word מַיִם *mayim* (water)... can be explained as a plural of extension or composition.)

There is also the plural of excellence or majesty, which occurs in words like:

- אֱלֹהִים *‘ēlōhim* (non-Israelite gods or the Israelite God)
- קֹדֶשִׁים *qəḏōšim* (the Holy One: Proverbs 9:10; 30:3)
- אֲדֹנִים *‘ăḏōnim* (ordinarily lords or the Lord, especially in ‘ăḏōnāy my Lord)

It seems that this is, at least in poetry, not restricted to the deity: שֶׁלַּחָיו *šōlahāw* (he who has sent him: Proverbs 10:26); מַרְמִיּוֹ *mərīmāw* (he who lifts it: Isaiah 10:15).

(Blog discussion accessed on 30/12/2023:

<https://linguistics.stackexchange.com/questions/38388/does-biblical-hebrew-have-a-plural-of-majesty>)

Therefore, it is more likely to refer to (3), *spiritual beings, the heavenly sons of God*. God is addressing *elohim* other than himself.

Summary

As we have seen, *‘elōhîm* is a noun with a dual ending. The context decides whether it refers to ‘God’ or ‘gods’. The plural verb in Genesis 1:26 means that the “us” most likely refers to God and other *elohim*, spiritual beings. These are the members of the Divine Council who were created by God to work with him

and under him in the administration of the heavens over the earth. In Job 38:7, the (*bēn' ʾēlō-hîm*) witness creation, but do not participate in the act of creation. There are many beings called *elohim*, but there is only one God and Creator, and only one Being who has the attributes of the God of the Bible. When it comes to the creation of humanity, Genesis 1:27 makes it clear that it was God himself who created *ʾādhām*.

An example of this way of speaking is found in the English language. I may begin my lectures with, "Let's start" or "Let's do this". I am including all my students when I say that, but I am the one who goes on to lecture.

LECTURE THREE: Creation of the Visible World

God did not reveal the creation story in a cultural vacuum. Creation myths in the Ancient Near East varied from place to place and from time to time. All, except the Hebrew people were polytheists. ANE creation stories involved many gods, primeval battles and the struggle between chaos and order.

THE FORCES OF CHAOS: ANE Creation Stories (Mike Heiser et.al.)

The creation stories of Israel's neighbours in the ANE include Egypt, Mesopotamia and Ugarit, as in the Ras Shamra Ugarit tablets (Canaanite Ba'al Cycle which is not specifically about creation, but contain references to Baal's subjugation and control over the gods of chaos).

UGARIT. A Ugaritic text from the second millennium B.C. has a structure very similar to Psalm 92:9, although it praises Baal (rather than Yahweh): "Now your enemies, O Baal; now your enemies you will smite; now you will vanquish your foes." The biblical poets used the literary forms of their culture but always were clear that it was Yahweh who deserved their praise (ESV Study Bible).

EGYPT. In Egyptian literature creation is not treated in one text, nor is there an authoritative account, though underlying this diversity is one consistent viewpoint. The text of the Memphite Theology is the longest sustained creation myth, but other significant creation remarks are found dispersed among numerous early and late texts (the only text from the ANE which has a god create by speaking).

MESOPOTAMIA. Since the recoveries in the nineteenth century of the Babylonian creation myth *Enuma Elish* and the flood story *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Mesopotamian studies have inordinately² influenced scholarship's understanding of Genesis 1–11³

² "Inordinate" in as much as scholars have read an over-dependence on these texts on behalf of the Hebrew writers. This is presented as simple borrowing or being unduly influenced by these texts thus relegating the Hebrew Scriptures to the level of their pagan counterparts. However, though the similarities are important, the differences are even more important showing the true intent of the Hebrew authors – to debunk the theologies of their pagan counterparts.

³ Full quote from K. A. Mathews, [Genesis 1-11:26](#), vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 91–92.

The creation account revealed by God to the Hebrew people does not ignore the mythology of their pagan neighbours. Instead, it incorporates elements from these stories in order to make strong theological points. Themes and elements found in the surrounding cultures overlap with the account in the Hebrew Bible. This is understandable. God used familiar terms and ideas drawn from ancient cosmogony and cosmology in order to be understood by people who lived in those times. Genesis is a factual account but for obvious reasons it is not communicated in terms of 21st Century science.

Instead, we have a powerful revelation of the origin of the heavens and the earth and of the God who created all things. The biblical account sets the record straight and establishes God as the Sovereign Lord and Creator of all things. The mythologies of Israel's neighbours are overturned and the uniqueness of Israel's God is established.

Order from chaos

Most ancient creation stories begin with chaos and the battle between rival gods. The result is order coming out of primeval chaos. To see how this plays out in Genesis 1, we must seek to understand the opening text.

הָאָרֶץ:	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
hā·'ā·rēs	w ^c ēt'	hāš·šā·mā'·yim	'ēt'	'ēlō·hîm'	bā·rā(')	b ^c rē(')·šîl'
הָאָרֶץ · ה	אֵת · ו	הַשָּׁמַיִם · ה	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
hā' · 'ē·rēs	w · 'ēt'	hā' · šā·mā'·yim	'ēt'	'ēlō·hîm'	br'	b · rē(')·šîl'
the · earth	and · [obj]	the · heaven ^{bc}	[obj]	God	create ^a	in · beginning
the · earth	and · [obj]	the · heaven	[obj]	God	(he) created	in · the beginning (of) ¹
A · NC-SA	C · PO	A · NCMPA	PO	NCMPA	VaP3MS	P · NCFSA

וְחָשֶׁךְ	וְבָהוּ	תְהוֹ	הַיְתָה	וְהָאָרֶץ	2
w ^c hō'·šēk	wā·bō'·hû	tō'·hû	hōy·tā(h)'	w ^c hā·'ā'·rēs	
וְחָשֶׁךְ · ו	וְבָהוּ · ו	תְהוֹ	הִיא	וְהָאָרֶץ · ה · ו	
w · hō'·šēk	w · bō'·hû	tō'·hû	hyh	w · hā' · 'ē'·rēs	
and · darkness	and · empty	wasteland	be	and · the · earth	
and · darkness	and · empty	a wasteland/unformed	she it was	and · the · earth	
C · NC-SA	C · NC-SA	NC-SA	VaP3FS	C · A · NC-SA	

מְרֻחָה	אֱלֹהִים	וְרוּחַ	תְּהוֹם	עַל-פְּנֵי
m ^c rā·hē'·pēt	'ēlō·hîm'	w ^c rû ^a h'	t ^c hôm'	'āl-p ^c nē'
רוּחַ	אֱלֹהִים	וְרוּחַ · ו	תְּהוֹם	עַל · פְּנֵה
rhp	'ēlō·hîm'	w · rû ^a h	t ^c hôm'	'āl' · pā·nēh'

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hover God and · spirit/breath^a the deep over · face|surface
[was] hovering God and · the spirit/breath of the deep [was] over · the surface of
VbR-FSA NCMPA C · NC-SC NC-SA P · NCMP

עַל־פָּנָי הַמַּיִם:
hām·mā'·yim 'āl-p^h·nê'
עַל · פָּנָה הַ · מַיִם
hā' · mā'·yim 'āl' · pā·nēh'
the · waters over · face|surface
the · waters over · the surface of
A · NCMPA P · NCMP

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי־אֹר: 3
wă·yō·mēr 'ēlō·hîm' y^hhî' 'ôr' wă·y^h·hî-ô'r'
וְ · אָמַר אֱלֹהִים הָיָה אֹר וְ · הָיָה · אֹר
w · 'mr 'ēlō·hîm' hyh 'ôr' w · hyh · 'ôr'
and · say God be light and · be · light
and · (he) said God let he|there be light and · he|there was · light
C · VaW3MS NCMPA NC-SA Val3MS-J NC-SA C · VaW3MS

Genesis 1:1-3

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens [sky] and the earth [land]. 2 The earth [land] was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ESV

(The “heavens” שָׁמַיִם *šāmayim* is a plural (tantum) noun like ‘spectacles’ or ‘shoes’.)

There are various ways of reading Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” may either be an independent or a dependent clause.

Standing alone, as an independent clause, Genesis 1:1 may be understood either as a heading, or title for what is to come. It introduces or summarises the whole creation account which follows.

Or, it could be taken as the first act of creation. First, God created the heavens and the earth, then went on to activate the six days of creation that follow in the text.

Of these two options the second seems unlikely. The “expanse” or solid dome above the earth (רָקִיעַ *rāqîa*), which is called “heaven”, appears on the second

day (Genesis 1:7) and the “dry land” which is called the earth appears on the third day (Genesis 1:10). This seems to contradict Genesis 1:1.

But there is another way of looking at the Hebrew grammar. The Jerusalem Publication Society (JPS), an English version of the Hebrew Scriptures (*tanakh*), translates Genesis 1:1-3 in the following way:

1 When God began to create heaven and earth — 2 the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water — 3 God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. JPS

Drawing on Hebrew grammar, the JPS version takes both verses 2 and 3 as dependent clauses with the main clause beginning in verse 3.

1st Dependent Clause

Verse 1: *When God began to create heaven and earth*

2nd Dependent Clause

Verse 2: *the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water*

Main Clause

Verse 3: *God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.*

The main point to understand is that the conditions of Genesis 1:2 existed before the main action in verse 3: God created light.

Genesis 1:2

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ESV

An important part of the biblical revelation of creation is the conditions that existed when God began to create the world. Genesis 1:2 does not describe the absolute beginning of creation, but what God did to bring about the creation as we now know it.

Chaos Versus Order

The creation story begins with a certain kind of “chaos”. However, the “chaos” of Genesis 1:2, is not the chaos of the pagan religions in the ANE. In fact, the description of God’s “chaos” is a polemic against, a repudiation of paganism.

Chaos is a state of disorder. Having brought something out of nothing, God had yet to bring order to the cosmos. Later in Genesis, we discover that rebellious spiritual powers soon brought disruption into God’s order by introducing chaos into creation (Genesis 3:1-7). And, because God is in charge of the whole cosmos, he uses chaos in judgment (Genesis 3:8-19).

What we learn from Genesis creation narratives:

1. God begins with the Genesis 1:2 state – empty, dark, unformed, a form of ‘chaos’, yet to be purposed.
2. He is in charge of it

- a. It was under his control. It was quiescent (gentle, calm).
- b. It was formless and unfilled. Empty because God was about to bring form, shape and order and fill it with plants, animals and humans.
- c. It was dark (because light had not been created). 'Dark', here, does not mean evil.
- d. There are no other gods present
- e. There is no conflict between different gods
- f. There is no association with this 'chaos' and judgement.
3. God is present. The wind (or Spirit) of God is moving over the surface of the waters.
4. God's Word is absolute – "God said, 'let there be light, and there was light.'"
5. This 'chaos' represents potential – the potential of a good and highly developed order which
 - a. Reflects God's character
 - b. Exhibits God's power, wisdom and providential care
 - c. Provides a dwelling place for God with humanity
 - i. The heaven is God's dwelling place (along with the sons of God, members of his heavenly council)
 - ii. The earth is the dwelling place of humans
 - iii. The seventh day continues – there is no "evening and morning" on the seventh day.
 - d. In Eden God and humanity are together in fellowship with no barrier between them. Heaven and earth are one, sacred space.
 - e. Eden gives the context for humanity's role as image bearers
 - f. The Temple became a new Eden, the new dwelling place of God with humanity
 - g. Jerusalem, the Holy Land – in an extended sense, is also sacred space
 - h. The New Jerusalem and the new heavens and the new earth will be the fulfilment of a restored cosmos where heaven and earth are once again in open harmony.

SUMMARY

- God created both the spiritual and the physical realms and populated each with different kinds of beings.
- The spiritual/non-embodied beings lived in heaven and physical/embodied beings had earth as their place of abode.
- The heavenly beings are called *'ēlōhîm* (gods) and the earthly beings are called *'ādhām*, (humankind).
- The *'ēlōhîm* are also called "the (heavenly) sons of God" (*bēn' 'ēlō-hîm*'), a familial and relational term.
- *'ādhām*, by implication refers to God's earthly sons

- God has two families, one on earth and one in heaven, each with similar roles to fulfill, but within their respective spheres
- Later biblical revelation shows the significance of this in the greater plan of God (Hebrews 12:22).

LECTURE 4: Humanity and the Image of God

INTRODUCTION & RECAP

Looking honestly at the text of Scripture:

- Not a modernistic or rationalistic approach which rejects the reality of the spiritual realm
- Not a post-modernistic or subjective approach in which the person reading the text determines the meaning for themselves
- But a sound hermeneutical approach, looking at the text in its full ANE context and how the ancient Israelite would have understood it and, then, then letting the text speak to us today
- This will help us grasp a fully biblical worldview especially in regard to the spiritual world.

Imago Dei

There are 3 main ways scholars have understood, the Imago Dei, or image of God in humanity⁴:

- *Substantive view* – characteristics or qualities that God possesses which he has specifically given to humanity, and are not possessed by the other members of the animal kingdom. Namely, mind, emotions, will, creativity, self-reflection, self-determination. These are his ‘communicable’ attributes as opposed to his ‘non-communicable’ attributes such as omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence
- *Relational view* – the relational nature of God, inherent in his trinitarian nature given to humanity in order to reflect his relational holiness in the world. Also, the capacity, as distinct from the animals, to stand apart from

4 A brief survey of various views is found in D. J. A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” TB (1968), pp. 54–61. Millard Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 498–510, also gives a helpful summary of three major views of the image of God in man that have been held throughout the history of the church: (1) the substantive view, which identifies some particular quality of man (such as reason or spirituality) as being the image of God in man (Luther, Calvin, many early church writers); (2) relational views, which held that the image of God had to do with our interpersonal relationships (Emil Brunner; also Karl Barth, who saw the image of God specifically in our being created as male and female); and (3) the functional view, which holds that the image of God has to do with a function we carry out, usually our exercise of dominion over the creation (a Socinian view that is also held by some modern writers such as Norman Snaith and Leonard Verduin). (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, page 443, footnote 8).

creation and form social relationships within the whole creation order, especially with other humans and, chiefly, with God himself

- *Functional view* – the status or role God gave human beings as his royal representatives on the earth to fulfill the Creation Mandate.

All these approaches have value, but the following presentation proposes the functional view:

The image of God is the status God has given humanity as his vice-regents on the earth.

RECAP:

Genesis Gen 1:26-28

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ESV

Verse 26

"...Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."

God announces his desire, his will to create humanity as his divine imagers. Who do these plurals refer to?

Trinity? No. God does not have to inform himself, or the other members of the Trinity – they are co-eternal, co-equal and co-omniscient.

Majesty? No. If God were merely referring to himself using the 'royal we', the plural of majesty, then to whom is he speaking? He is announcing his intention to someone or some others apart from himself.

Heavenly or divine Council? More likely.

Before the creation of the physical world, God created a spiritual world – heavenly, spiritual beings called "sons of God", who witness the creation of the physical world:

Job 38:4-7

⁴"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ⁵Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ESV

In the OT, "morning stars", "sons of God", "holy ones", "heavenly host", "gods" (*elohim*), "armies of heaven", all refer to the same spiritual beings, the heavenly sons of God.

While the people of Israel and their kings are referred to as "son of God", the vast majority of OT occurrences of "sons of God", refer to spiritual beings. In a sense, all humanity are "sons of God", as God is their Father by creation. Even more so, the children of Israel can be seen as sons of God, as he adopted the nation as his portion (Deuteronomy 32:8-9).

The NT, however uses the term "sons of God" exclusively of believers in Christ. The same applies to the description "holy ones" who are the heavenly sons of God in the OT, whereas in the NT, the believers are called "saints" or "holy ones". This suggests that believers, who now have a high heavenly status, are going to be equal to, if not above, the heavenly beings in the future kingdom of God.

Luke 20:34-36

³⁴And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, ³⁵but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, ³⁶for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. ESV

1 Corinthians 6:3

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! ESV

Hebrews 2:5-12 [Psalms 8:4-5]

⁵Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? ⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸putting everything in subjection under his feet."

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

¹¹For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹²saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." ESV

Hebrews 12:22-23

²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect ESV

‘Sons of God’ Scriptural Data

OT – sons of God as spiritual beings

Genesis 6:2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ESV

Genesis 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

Deuteronomy 32:8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.

Job 38:7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Daniel 3:25 He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

OT – sons of God as human beings

Exodus 4:22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son'

Psalms 2:7 I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

Psalms 2:11-12 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Malachi 1:6 A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'

NT – sons of God as believers in Christ

Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Luke 3:35-38 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Luke 20:36 for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Romans 8:19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

Galatians 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

Imagers of God, the divine image in humanity

Family status and function

The heavenly sons of God were given a family status and role as members of the divine council. They were created to assist God in his heavenly rulership and government. As divine council members they reflect God's governorship of the cosmos.

An example of the divine council at work is found 1 Kings 22:1-23.

1 Kings 22:19-21

¹⁹And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; ²⁰and the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. ²¹Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will entice him.' ESV

Just as God had a heavenly council charged with assisting him in the heavenly realms so now God was announcing the creation of earthly imagers, charged with the task of fulfilling his purposes on the earth.

This was to fulfil the 'dominion mandate' given to humanity:

Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ESV

The mandate was to populate the earth (as male and female) and to spread God's government by extending Eden to all the world.

Verse 27 "So God created human beings in his own image..."

The "so" refers to what has gone before. In Hebrew it is a 'waw consecutive' connecting verse 27 to verse 26. It means "and so", that is, in fulfilment of God's announcement to the sons of God.

The image of God is a status with a role attached, rather than a set of characteristics. It refers to identity and function, who humanity is and what humanity does.

Examples of this use of words today:

“What do you do?” – “I work in banking” or “I’m in business”, or “I’m in the medical profession”.

As Christians, we can say, *“I’m in the business of imaging God.”*

The Image of God is a relational reality

The metaphor, “sons of God” was refers first to the spiritual beings. It indicates a heavenly family, a spiritual royal household belonging to the court of heaven, who under God’s direction, assist him in his rule of the heavens over the earth.

The implication of Genesis 1:26 is that humanity now shares in the image of God first granted to the heavenly beings. Humanity’s jurisdiction is the earth. Theirs is the heavenly realms.

The heart of the matter is this: we were created as human beings to be in a divine Father-son relationship of loving intimacy and total dependence, and out off this relationship we have been commissioned to be God’s representatives on earth. We are image-bearers and our role is to reflect that image into the world by living in and extending God’s kingdom in all the earth.

IMAGE OR IMAGE BEARER? Heiser, *Unseen Realm* pages 40-43

Thinking the image of God in man in terms of abilities or properties

- Intelligence
- Reasoning ability
- Emotions
- The ability to commune with God
- Self-awareness (sentience)
- Language/communication ability
- The presence of soul or spirit (or both)
- The conscience
- Free will

Problems with this approach

- These qualities are not held *equally* by all human beings
- Not all human beings at all times in their life possess *all* of these qualities. For example, people in a coma, PVS, locked-in syndrome, advanced stages of brain disease may lose some, if not all, of these abilities. Does this make them once human, but now no longer human?

- Non-human beings possess *some* of these qualities (animals of animal cognition, AI, Aliens?)
- *Potential* human life is not *actual* human life. Conception is where human life begins. A zygote does not possess these qualities, but nevertheless is a human being.
- Soul (*nephesh*) and spirit (*ruach*) are also not exclusively human.
 - Humans are animated by the breath of God. Genesis 2:7 *nephesh hayyah*, lit “living soul”, translated as “living creature” or “living being”.
 - Animals described in the same way. Genesis 1:21 “God created every living creature that moves” *nephesh hayyah*
 - Animals have a *ruach* Ecclesiastes 3:21, meaning “animate life”
 - Man has been given “the breath of life” *nishmat hayyim*, but so have all land life Genesis 7:22-23.

Genesis teaches us several things about the image of God—what I call “divine image bearing.”

All of what we learn from the text must be accounted for in any discussion of what the image means.

1. Both men and women are equally included.
2. Divine image bearing is what makes humankind distinct from the rest of earthly creation (i.e., plants and animals). The text of Genesis 1:26 does not inform us that divine image bearing makes us distinct from heavenly beings, those sons of God who were already in existence at the time of creation. The plurals in Genesis 1:26 mean that, in some way, we share something with them when it comes to bearing God’s image.
3. There is something about the image that makes humankind “like” God in some way.
4. There is nothing in the text to suggest that the image has been or can be bestowed incrementally or partially. You’re either created as God’s image bearer or you aren’t. One cannot speak of being partly or potentially bearing God’s image.

Meaning of “in the image of God”

Different meaning of “in” (English language)

- I put the dishes in the sink (location)
- I broke the mirror in pieces (action)
- I wrote in pencil (means)
- I work in Education (function)

Working *in* Education, Medicine, etc. means working *as* a teacher, doctor etc. That is, not a quality or an attribute, but a function.

Functional vs Qualitative meaning: “Let us create humankind AS our image, to be our IMAGER [Heb Gram. the ‘beth’ of predication etc]”

The image of God, is a status, one who functions as a representative of God. It is understood better as a verb than as a noun.

Status/representation (proxy, agent in the world). This is seen in Exodus 20:70, taking or “bearing” the name in vain. To “bear the name” is to be a representative of the name. You can represent him well, or badly.

Created in the image of God, means to be created for a purpose, to participate with God to complete the tasks assigned to us. In the fallen world, only the redeemed can do this effectively or fully.

Imaging language is used of Jesus in the NT. 2 Corinthians 4:4; Hebrews 1: 3. Jesus is the perfect image/representative of God: “If you’ve seen me you’ve seen the Father.”

God has predestined that all who believe will ultimately be “conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29). We will ultimately be like Jesus (1 John 3:1-3)

Genesis 1:26,27 “In our image, in our likeness”. This is one of the reasons for the plural language. God is the lone creator. We do not image the heavenly beings, but both heavenly and earthy sons of God, image or mirror God. Lord’s prayer, may your will be done on earth as its done in heaven: “as in heaven, so on earth”. The key idea is co-representation.

God has shared some of his (communicable) attributes with us so that we can function as his imagers. [so qualities such as mind, emotions and will are what enables us to do the work of imaging, but are not be identified as the image]

The earth is to become a reflection of heaven. This is the whole purpose of God in creating humanity and giving his mandate, “be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.” In other words, God has called humanity to spread his rule over all the earth and to image his rule, his nature, his character in the world, so that heaven may come down to earth.

The New Heavens and New Earth, is also the New Eden, the Eden project will be complete.

Human rebellion means to turn our back on our calling as images of God in order to gain autonomy. We want to govern our own lives. So the image of God is marred in sinful humanity to the point we cannot accurately reflect God in the world. Redemption makes that possible again, our full status is restored (Justification), our ability to image of God is restored (Sanctification) and our whole personality finally, will be perfected (Glorification) when the full image of God will be restored in us.

God’s foreknowledge of the Fall does not mean he willed it to happen (predestination). But God foreknows the actions of free agents without

compromising their free will. So divine predestination is not antithetical to human free will. God did not predestine evil, that would make him the author or agent of evil. But he foreknew it because he knew it would happen. This shows that foreknowledge is not synonymous with predestination. God allowed evil to exist because he judged that was better than not having us at all.

SUMMARY

The image of God in humanity is a status. God's imagers are his partners and representatives. But this function has a relational context. We are created to be in fellowship with God. Our imaging can only be successful in relationship with him.

The family metaphor, "sons of God", first used of the heavenly beings, is now shared with the new earthly family of God. God's ultimate purpose is the unite both families in under his government and in his presence.

LECTURE 5: Male and Female in the Creation Story

IDENTITY COMES BEFORE ROLE

Most theological discussion about male and female centres on the roles of men and women in marriage, the family, the church and wider society. There are two main theological views:

- *Egalitarianism*, emphasises the equality of the sexes and teaches the family, the church and society at large should make no distinction on what positions women hold, jobs they can perform or roles they can fulfil
- *Complementarianism*, acknowledges that men and women are equal in dignity and worth, but their roles differ in various spheres, especially in the family and in the church.

But any discussion about male and female *roles* must begin with male and female *identity*. What do masculinity (being male) and femininity (being female) mean? Is there a biblical answer?

Larry Crabb agrees that we should begin with identity. In *Fully Alive: A Biblical Vision of Gender That Frees Men and Women to Live beyond Stereotypes*, he tackles the issue through the lens of relational theology. Masculinity and femininity are part of our distinctive identity as gendered image bearers.

Complementarians gladly acknowledge that men and women are different, and insist that the God-created differences lie mainly in gender-defined roles. Masculine men lead. Feminine women submit.

Egalitarians often agree that men and women are different. But rather than exploring our gender uniqueness with the hope of releasing men and women into their God-designed masculinity and femininity, their focus centers on the full equality of women with men.

(Page 26)

MALE AND FEMALE IDENTITY IN THE BIBLE

First creation account

Male זָכָר (*zākār*) and Female נְקֵבָה (*nēqēbā*)

Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ESV

Analysis of the text

Verse 26: ***Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion***

Men and women are God's joint representatives on earth and have a dominion mandate.

Verse 27:

- ***male and female he created them*** – two sexes (genders), a binary biological and theological reality

Verse 28: – the scope of the creation mandate:

- ***And God blessed them*** – the mandate is preceded by relational blessing
- ***And God said to them*** – God spoke creation into being ("let there be..."). Now he speaks to humanity, revealing his purpose for creation.
- ***Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*** – procreation is at the heart of the relational mandate and fundamental to the male/female distinction
- ***And subdue it*** – a 'kingdom' mandate, essentially to spread the conditions of Eden over the whole earth, showing that the creation was originally 'good' but not 'perfect'. It needed to come under the direct rule and presence of God. Notice this 'temple theology' associated with Eden.
- ***and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth*** – The dominion was to be over the natural world. Human beings are the earthly counterparts of the heavenly sons of God. God's purpose is to unite the two families of heaven and earth under his authority and in his presence, as it was in Eden. This Eden project will have its eschatological fulfilment in the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven, and in the New Heavens and the New Earth, the eternal home of righteousness.

Key points:

- The human race exists in one genus or kind – humankind אָדָם (*ādām*)
- It exists in two forms – male זָכָר (*zākār*) and female נִקְבָּה (*nēqēbā*)
- Both equally carry God's image and both are equal in dignity and worth
- Both have an equal part to play in the creation mandate but bring their distinctiveness into the partnership
- Identity as male and female precedes role or function
- Relationship is fundamental in the creation of humanity – God, marriage (male and female), family and community.
- The Creation Mandate begins and continues only with God's blessing.

Second creation account

Man אָדָם (*īś*) and Woman אִשָּׁה (*īś-šāh*)

Genesis chapter 2 gives us a second account of creation. In it, God adds some key perspectives on the creation of the world in general and of humankind in particular. It is full of significant information concerning the identity and roles of men and women.

Genesis 2:18

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for [corresponding to] him." ESV

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים	לֹא-טוֹב	הֵיחָד הָאָדָם
wăy·yô(')·mēr	'ēlō·hîm' yhwh	lō(')-tôb'	hă·'ā·dām' h'ēyôṭ'
וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים	לֹא · טוֹב	הִיא · הָאָדָם
w · 'mr	'ēlō·hîm' yhwh	lō' · tōb'	hă · 'ā·dām' hyh
and · say	God Yahweh	not · good	the · human be
and · (he) said	God Yahweh	not · [it is] good	the · human to be
C · VaW3MS	NCMPA NPMSA	G · J-SA	A · NC-SA VaF---C

לְבַדּוֹ*	אֶעֱשֶׂה-לּוֹ	עֵזֶר	כְּנֻגְדּוֹ:
l'ēbād·dô'	'ē·'ēšēh-lô'	'ē·zēr	k'ēnēg·dô'
לְ · בַד · הוּא	עֲשֶׂה · לְ · הוּא	עֵזֶר	כְּ · נֻגַד · הוּא
l · bād' · hû(')	'sh · l · hû(')	'ē·zēr	k · nē'·gēd · hû(')
to · alone · he	make · for · he	helper	as · counterpart · he
(to) · alone · him	make · for · him	as · counterpart · his a helper I will make · for · him	as · counterpart · he
P · NCMS	P · NCMS	P · NCMS	P · NCMS

The man (*ādām*) is 'incomplete' in himself. It is not good לֹא טוֹב (*lō' tōb*) for the man to be alone. And it follows also that the woman is incomplete without the man. The creation of humanity did not end when God made Adam. Man is incomplete without woman.

God created Adam with an in-built need for companionship, an inner need for connecting with another human. It was an inner incompleteness. God met his need for companionship by creating Eve. This shows that God's Creation Mandate was never to be carried by man alone or by woman alone; but by man and woman working together in equality, harmony, interdependence and complementary.

The word translated 'comparable', 'help meet' or 'helper' in the Bible means 'that which exactly corresponds to'. God made Eve so as to exactly correspond to Adam. They perfectly complemented each other. Their destiny and purpose lay not in their separate or individual personal qualities. Rather it was only to be found as they came together in unity, equality, harmony and co-operation with each other. This is the essence of marriage.

This is confirmed by Genesis 2:23-24

Genesis 2:23-24

²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

ESV

מֵעַצְמוֹ	עָצָם	הַפֶּעַם	זֹאת	הָאָדָם	וַיֹּאמֶר
mē·'āšā·mäy'	'ē·šēm'	hăp·pă'·'ām	zō(')t'	hā·'ā·dām'	wăy·yō(')·mēr'
מִן · עָצָם · אֲנִי	עָצָם	הַ · פֶּעַם	זֹאת	הָ · אָדָם	וַיֹּאמֶר
min' · 'ē·šēm · 'āniy'	'ē·šēm	hă' · pă'·'ām	zō(')t'	hă' · 'ā·dām'	w · 'mr
from · bone · I	bone	the · time	this	the · human	and · say
[are] from · bones · my	bone[s]	the · time	this	the · human	and · (he) said
P · NCMP · RS1-S	NC-SA	A · NC-SA	RD-FS	A · NC-SA	C · VaW3MS

וּבָשָׂר

û·bā·śār'

וּבָשָׂר · אֲנִי

w · bā·śār'

and · flesh

and · flesh

C · NC-SA

מֵעַצְמוֹ	כִּי	אִשָּׁה	יִקְרָא	לְזֹאת	מִבְּשָׂרִי
mē·'iš'	kí'	'iš·śā(h)'	yiq·qā·rē(')'	l'zō(')t'	mib·b'ēśā·rī'
מִן · עָצָם · אֲנִי	כִּי	אִשָּׁה	קָרָא	לְ · זֹאת	מִן · בָּשָׂר · אֲנִי
min' · 'iš' · kiy'	'iš·śāh'	qr'	l · zō(')t'	min' · bā·śār' · 'āniy'	
from · man for woman	be called	to · this	from · flesh · I		
from · man for woman	he it shall be called (to) · this [one]	from · flesh · my			
P · NC-SA	C	NCFS	VdI3MS	P · RD-FS	P · NC-SC · RS1-S

לְקַחְהָ-זֹאת:

lŭ·q^hhā(h)-z·zō(')t'

לְקַח · זֹאת

lqh · zō(')t'

be taken · this

she was taken · this [one]

VeP3FS · RD-FS

Textual points from Genesis 2:23:

- **At last** (lit. “this time”) – no suitable helper for Adam had been found among the animals.
- **This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh** – Eve was formed from Adam’s side.
- **She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man** – the Hebrew word for woman אִשָּׁה (’iš-šāh’) sounds like the Hebrew word for man אָדָם (’āḏām’).

All this shows the uniqueness in the natural order of male and female being joined together in marriage. No other relationship can be equal to or comparable with heterosexual marriage. Here, theology meets biology. Only males (those with male gametes, sperm) and females (those with female gametes ova) can reproduce offspring and therefore fulfil God’s creation mandate.

Verse 24 goes on to establish the parameters of the marriage covenant:

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ESV

We have seen that the roles of men and women flow out of distinctive male and female identities. Any societal transformation of these roles must move away from cultural stereotypes and be based on masculine and feminine identity. They are equal, but different.

To put it another way, what does it mean to be a fully alive man and a fully alive woman? What does a Spirit-filled woman look like and what does a Spirit-filled man look like? Basing our views of social equality on men and women being exactly the same is neither sound biology nor sound theology.

Biblical theology is helpful for the whole of society, and Christians must be especially informed by it. A good starting point is the significance of the words, ‘male’ and ‘female’ in the Bible.

The initial somatic meaning of male and female must be extended to the whole human personality including the soul.

Genesis 2:7

then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ESV

וַיִּצְרֵן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה
min-hā-’āḏāmā(h)’ ‘ā-pār’ ‘ēt-hā-’ā-ḏām’ ’ēlō-hîm’ yhwh wāy-yî-šer’

יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּצַּר
 min' · hă' · 'ā·dā·māh' 'ā·pār' 'ēl' · hă' · 'ā·dām' 'ēlō·hîm' yhw h w · ysr
 from · the · ground dust [obj] · the · human God Yahweh and · form
 from · the · ground [of] dust [obj] · the · human God Yahweh and · (he) formed
 P · A · NCFSA NC-SA PO · A · NC-SA NCMPA NPMSA C · VaW3MS

וַיִּפַּח	בְּאַפִּי	נְשָׁמַת	חַיִּים	וַיְהִי	הָאָדָם
wăy·yip·păh'	b'·'ăp·pāyw'	niš·măt'	hăy·yîm'	wă·y·hî'	hă·'ā·dām'
and · he blew	in · nostril · he	breath	life	and · be	the · human
and · he blew	in · nostrils · his	the breath of	life(s)	and · (he) became	the · human
C · VaW3MS	P · NC-DC · RS3MS	NCMPA	NCFSC	C · VaW3MS	A · NC-SA

חַיָּה:	לְנֶפֶשׁ
hăy·yā(h)'	l'·nē'·pěš
חַי	לְנֶפֶשׁ · לְ
hăy'	l · nē'·pěš
living	to/as · creature ^a
living	(as) ¹ · a creature being
JFSA	P · NC-SA

Adam became “a living soul” or “a living being”. It was the Greeks, not the Hebrews, who separated the physical (body) from the nonphysical (soul) into two different realities. The body theology of the Hebrews extended to the soul or *psyche*.

They viewed humans not as two categories of being, but one, psychosomatic unity of being (body-soul). Hence the need for the resurrection of the body into eternal life in biblical theology, as opposed to the mere immortality of the soul.

LECTURE 6: Male and Female Identity

Biblical words for ‘male’ and ‘female’

- Genesis 1:27 (Hebrew)
 ‘Male’ in Hebrew is זָכָר (*zākār*) and ‘female’ is נְקֵבָה (*nēqēbâ*).
- Mark 10:6 (Greek)
 Male’ in Greek is ἄρσεν (*arsēn*) and female is θήλυς (*thēlys*).

Both the Hebrew and Greek words point to the fundamental identity of male and female, what it means to be masculine or feminine.

The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament⁵ says,

The noun *zākhār* occurs 82 times in the OT and indicates the male sex of a species of both men and animals.

The etymology of *zākhār* is obscure; we can conjecture that the root conception is “be sharp, pointed.” The evidence of Arab. *ḍakar*, meaning both “male” and “penis,” supports what is in any case the probable conclusion that the basic reference is “penis, phallus.” In Ezk. 16:17, the phrase *tsalmê zākhār* apparently indicates images containing phallic symbols; but even here the reference is to the sexual character of the image rather than to the phallus itself, which is consistent with the meaning found elsewhere.

A connection with the root *zkr*, “mention, name, remember,” has often been conjectured, but this remains obscure and unsupported. In Akkadian, the noun *zikaru*, “male,” is kept quite distinct from the verb *zakāru*, “declare, mention, name,” and the noun *zikru*, “words.”

The derivation of *neqēbhāh* from the root *nqb*, “bore, pierce,” understood in a sexual reference, is reasonably clear.

See also, James Swanson, Dictionary of Biblical Languages⁶

(*zkr*)

2

349 I. זָכַר (*zā-kār*): v.; = Str 2142; TWOT 551—1. LN 29.6–29.12 (*qal*) remember, i.e., to recall information or events (2Ki 9:25); (*nif*) remembered (Eze 33:13); 2. LN 29.16–29.18 (*qal*) **remember, i.e., to recall information or events, with a focus on responding in an appropriate manner (Ex 6:5)** [emphasis added]; (*qal* pass.) be remembered (Ps 103:14), see also 2345; (*nif*) remembered, invoked (Hos 2:17); (*hif*) mention, remind, cause to remember (Ge 40:14); 3. LN 33.218–33.223 (*hif*) proclaim, tell, i.e., assert truths about one, as one speaks publicly, implying that this information has been known before (Jer 4:16); 4. LN 65.1–65.16 unit: (nif) לֹא זָכַר (*lō' zā-kār*) worth forgetting, formally, not remember, i.e., have a low value, with a focus that the item is not unforgettable (Job 28:18); note: further study may yield more domains.

2352 זִכְרִי (*zē-ker*): n.masc.; = Str 2143; TWOT 551a—1. LN 29.6–29.12 memory, what is remembered, implying honor (Ex 17:14; Dt 25:19; 32:26; Est 9:28; Job 18:17; Ps 6:6[EB 5]; 9:7[EB 6]; 34:17[EB 16]; 109:15; Pr 10:7; Ecc 9:5; Isa 26:14+); 2. LN 29.6–29.12 remembrance, implying a worship or celebration (Ex 3:15; Ps 111:4; 112:6; 145:7+); 3. LN 28.28–28.56 fame, renown, name of renown, i.e., what is well known, implying status or honor (Ps 30:5[EB 4]; 97:12; 102:13[EB 12]; 135:13; Isa 26:8; Hos 12:6[EB 5]; 14:8[EB 7]+), see also domain LN 87.4–87.18

2355 זִכְרוֹן (*zik-kā-rôn*): n.masc.; = Str 2146; TWOT 551b—1. LN 29.6–29.12 memorial, commemoration, i.e., a place or object to remind one of something (Ex 28:29; Jos 4:7); 2. LN 57.125–57.141 inheritance right, formally, memorial, i.e., the right or claim to a possession based on a prior agreement (Ne 2:20), note: NIV translates

⁵ Taken from R. E. Clements, “זָכַר,” ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 83.

⁶ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

“historic right”; 3. LN 33.11–33.25 maxim, proverb, by-word, i.e., a brief statement easily remembered (Job 12:13); 4. LN 33.476–33.489 symbol, pagan signs, formally, remembrance, i.e., a non-verbal artifact which conveys information about the relationship of a god to his/her people (Isa 57:8); 5. LN 53.16–53.27 unit: מִנְחָה זָכָרוֹן (min-ḥā(h) zik-kā-rôn) reminder offering (Nu 5:15, 18); 6. LN 33.35–33.68 unit: סֵפֶר הַזָּכָרוֹן (sē-ṣēr hā- zik-kā-rôn) Book of Remembrance, i.e., a written record of historical records (Ex 17:14; Est 6:1; Mal 3:16+)

Now, let's look at the Greek: Mark 10:6

ἀπὸ	δὲ	ἀρχῆς	κτίσεως	ἄρσεν	καὶ	θῆλυ
<i>apo</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>archēs</i>	<i>ktiseōs</i>	<i>arsen</i>	<i>kai</i>	<i>thēly</i>
ἀπό	δέ	ἀρχή	κτίσις	ἄρσεν	καί	θῆλυς
<i>apo</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>archē</i>	<i>ktisis</i>	<i>arsēn</i>	<i>kai</i>	<i>thēlys</i>
P	CLC	NGSF	NGSF	NASN, JASN	CLN	JASN
from	but	beginning	creation	male	and	female
from ₂	but ₁	the beginning ₃	of creation ₄	male ₇	and ₈	female ₉

ἐποίησεν ἑαυτούς

epoiēsen autous

ποιέω αὐτός

poieō autos

VAAI3S RP3APM

to make he

he made₅ them₆

“male” and “female” - ἄρσεν (arsēn) καὶ θῆλυς (thēlys) “he made them”

According to Strong, (arsēn) means “male” (as stronger for lifting):

NT:730 arsen (ar'-sane); probably from NT:142; male (as stronger for lifting): NT:142 airo (ah'-ee-ro); a primary root; to lift up; by implication, to take up or away; figuratively, to raise (the voice), keep in suspense (the mind), specially, to sail away (i.e. weigh anchor)

This physical reality sets the tone for the broader attribution of **a certain kind of strength which is linked to the male identity.**

He also shows the derivation of “female” (thēlys) linked to the breast/nipple and (by implication) to suck.

NT:2338 thelus (thay'-loos); from the same as NT:2337; female: NT:2337 thelazo (thay-lad'-zo); from thele (the nipple); to suckle, (by implication) to suck:

This sets the tone for **the female identity, showing the nurturing nature of the female.**

So, the Greek words indicate a strength on the part of the male, and a capacity to nurture on the part of the female.

Putting the Hebrew and Greek words together, we can begin to build a biblical identity of male and female:

Male:

Hebrew: “to be sharp, pointed”

Greek: “stronger for lifting”

Female:

Hebrew: “bored, pierced”

Greek: “breast, providing nurture”

These Bible words help us begin to formulate a biblical understanding of what it means to be male/masculine or female/feminine.

Crabb in *Fully Alive* puts it this way:

Physical femininity is centered in the capacity to receive and give, a body opened to be entered and to bring life through procreation, and breasts released to pour out nourishment that sustains life. Relational femininity is a way of relating that both invites life-giving connection from another and nourishes life-giving relating in another. (Page 66)

We earlier discussed how *neqebah*, “opened,” could refer to a women’s body as an image of the spiritual shape of a woman’s soul. Perhaps *zakar* can also be interpreted beyond the physical: a man’s movement in sex provides an image of how a masculine man moves in relationships. *Arsen*, Greek for male, means “to lift, to carry.” It points to the strength needed to move something from one place to another. **Together, *arsen* and *zakar* suggest the beginning idea that a man reflects God by remembering what is important and moving into a disordered situation with the strength to make an important difference** [emphasis added], (Page 68).

Brief Word About Roles

A key point found in Genesis 2:18 is that the woman was created to be the helper to the man. This shows that there is a certain priority in the role of the man. He is to be the *loving leader*. The woman is gifted as the *responsive helper*.

Male headship does not imply male domination in God's order. The model of this is the relationship between the Father and the Son and that of Christ and the Church. The Father is the Head of the Son and Christ is the Head of the Church. Both these models of headship can be summarised as 'loving leadership' and this is the pattern for male headship. (Colin Dye, *The Jezebel Spirit*, Leaders Notes).

Another essential truth is that the woman exactly corresponds to the man in that she equally shares God's dignity, worth and destiny along with him. She is not inferior to him just because her role is that of a *responsive helper*. The Holy Spirit is called the Helper, but He is certainly not inferior to the Father or the

Son. It's a matter of role and function. On the one hand, we must be very careful not to blur the distinctions between men and women or to confuse their God-given roles. But, on the other hand, the Bible does not teach that one sex is superior to the other.

Submission is not negative. Jesus is submissive to the Father. Submission therefore does not mean subordination or inferiority on the part of the one who is in submission. The role of helper in God's order is likewise a positive one. The Holy Spirit is called the Helper and his role is a delightful one within the Godhead (Colin Dye, *The Jezebel Spirit*, Leaders Notes).

One further point to bring out is that God created a wife to fulfil the need for companionship in Adam. This implies that Eve was also created with a corresponding need for companionship which was fulfilled in Adam. Therefore, God didn't create for Adam (or for Eve) a brother, a friend, a father, a mother, a son or a daughter. No other human relationship can take the place of marriage. God has ordained that our fundamental need for intimate companionship is to be met in marriage. We are not to try to meet this need by any other means - either by work, ministry, relationships, family or children.

Of course there is one big exception to this and that's the gift of singleness. Those who are called to a life of singleness are given special grace (the word *charisma* is used in 1 Corinthians 7, which is the same word used of 'charismatic' gifts). And this grace enables the person to live the life of singleness and have their need for companionship met by God (spiritually) and the human blessings that come with this special calling. See the following Scriptures:

Matthew 19:11-12

¹¹But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

1 Corinthians 7:7

For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

Those who are single and preparing themselves for their life partner in marriage can receive this same grace for their season of singleness. This way they can (and must) find fulfilment in Christ as single people *before* marriage. If not, their marriage relationships will be based on selfishness – on taking rather than giving. Their marriage partner can also become an idol which is expected to supply what a relationship with God alone can provide.

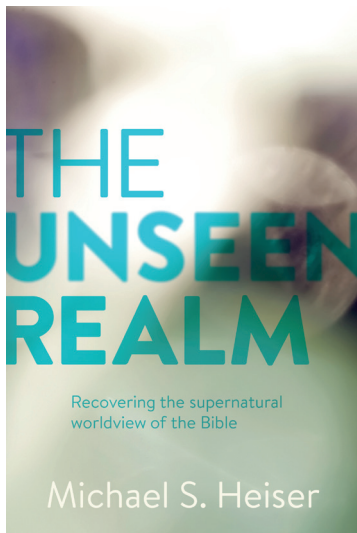
Summary

- There's a gap, an incompleteness in man without woman and a corresponding incompleteness in woman without the man
- Woman was made to be a helper to the man
- The man has a certain priority role of (headship)
- Femininity: "a way of relating that both invites life-giving connection from another and nourishes life-giving relating in another" (Crabb)
- Masculinity: "a man reflects God by remembering what is important and moving into a disordered situation with the strength to make an important difference" (Crabb).

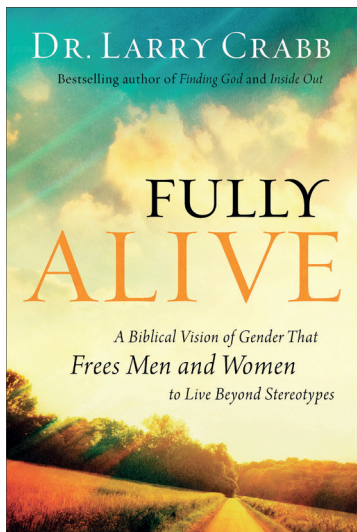
Q & A - NOTES

Q & A - NOTES

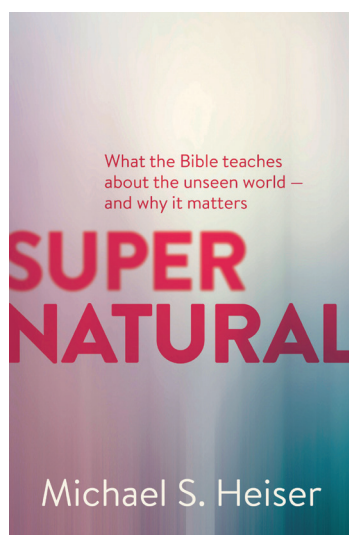
RECOMMENDED READING



Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm*,
Lexham Press, 2015



Larry Crabb, *Fully Alive*,
Baker Books, 2013



Michael S. Heiser, *Supernatural*,
Lexham Press, 2015



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