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# THE CREATION OF MAN: THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT

DS212—Anthropology  
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- We have two accounts of the creation of man: Gen 1:26–27 and Gen 2:7, 21–23.

<sup>1:26</sup> Then 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.”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם  
וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־  
הָאָרֶץ:

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

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה  
בָּרָא אֹתָם:

<sup>2:7</sup> 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.

<sup>2:21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then 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.”

7 וַיִּצַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפֶר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת  
חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

21 וַיִּפֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים תְּרַדְמָה עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצְלָעֹתָיו  
וַיִּסְגֶּר בְּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה:

22 וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַצֶּלֶע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּבְאֶהָ אֶל־  
הָאָדָם:

23 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עִצָּם מִעֲצָמֵי וּבְשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא  
אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לְקַחְהָ־זֹאת:

- The divine counsel is behind the creation of man, and the Genesis draws us into the plan and purpose of God so that we may clearly see man's position in this plan.
  - Gen 1:26b—“And let them have dominion (וַיִּרְדּוּ) 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.”
  - Gen 1:28—And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply (וּרְבוּ) and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion (וּרְדוּ) over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
  - Ps 8:4–8
    - <sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
    - <sup>5</sup> Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.
    - <sup>6</sup> You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,
    - <sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
    - <sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

מֵה־אָנוּשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֵנוּ וּבִן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקֹדֵנוּ:	5
וּתְחַסְּרֵהוּ מִעֵט מַאֲלֵהִים וְכָבוֹד וְהִדָּר תִּעְטְרֵהוּ:	6
תִּמְשִׁלֵּהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדָיךָ כֹּל שֶׁתָּה תַּחַת־רַגְלָיו:	7
צָנָה וְאַלְפִים כֻּלָּם וְגַם בְּהֵמוֹת שְׂדֵי:	8
צִפּוֹר שָׁמַיִם וּדְגֵי הַיָּם עֲבַר אֲרָחוֹת יָמַיִם:	9

- The Unity of Mankind
  - Man and animals were created on the sixth day and from the dust (Gen 1:26ff).
  - Man, however was created after divine deliberation and in the image of God. He was created to be special and to have dominion over the rest of the creation.
  - The two accounts of the creation of man demonstrate this fact. The first account in chapter one is a general account of creation whereas the account in chapter two stresses the particulars of humanity’s role.
  - Humanity as such is different from the rest of creation. This *difference* extends to every human being for they are *united*.
    - Scripture testifies to the unity of humanity (Gen 1:26; 6:3; 7:21; 10:32; Matt 19:4; Acts 17:26; Rom 5:12ff; 1 Cor 15:21f, 45f).<sup>1</sup>
    - Various people groups and adherents to other belief systems have not acknowledged this truth, which has led to a host of xenophobia and human rights atrocities.
    - Certainly, humanity is diverse in many ways, but that diversity does not compromise the fundamental and essential unity of human beings, who are created in the image of God.
    - Bavinck stresses the important of this point: “It is, finally, not a matter of indifference, as is sometimes claimed, but on the contrary of the utmost importance: it is the presupposition of religion and morality. The solidarity of the human race, original sin, the atonement in Christ, the universality of the kingdom of God, the catholicity of the church, and the love of neighbor—these all are grounded in the unity of humankind.”<sup>2</sup>
- As we look at these key texts, let us break down several elements in the creation of man.
  - The subject: God
    - נַעֲשֶׂה — Qal cohortative, first person plural.
      - In *The Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, Pratico and Van Pelt explain the use of the cohortative form.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bavinck, 2:523.

<sup>2</sup> Bavinck, 2:526.

<sup>3</sup> Pratico and Van Pelt, §18.13.

- “. . . the Cohortative is used to express a wish, request, or command. . . . when translating the Cohortative, use the key words ‘let’ or ‘may’. . . .”
- “The simple form of the Cohortative is the same as the Imperfect 1cs and 1cp forms . . . . What identifies the Cohortative or volitional use of the first person Imperfect is the position of the Imperfect verb in its clause. In general, when the Imperfect (not consecutive) 1 cs of 1cp verb is first in its clause, it is Cohortative. Conversely, when the Imperfect 1cs or 1cp verb is not first in its clause, it is not Cohortative but the regular Imperfect (though there are exceptions).”<sup>4</sup>
- In *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Arnold and Choi write, “The cohortative expresses the speaker’s desire, wish, or command, with the first person used as the subject of the action. In general, the cohortative emphasizes the determination behind the action, or one’s personal interest in it.”<sup>5</sup>
- God is especially interested in the creation of man, because it is the reproduction of his image.
  - This adds further context to the dominion that God gives to man.
  - While God creates all by divine fiat, there is a particular focus *and interest* on God’s part in the creation of man.
- This first person plural has been the occasion for much exegetical and theological debate. There are several possibilities:
  - First, it could be the persons of the Trinity speaking to one another.
  - Second, it could be God speaking among the divine counsel.
    - The setting would be God speaking from the upper register heavens in the presence of the angels, whom he has already created.
    - One initial problem to this view is that it seems to follow that man would be made made in the image of God *and* angels.
    - Verse 27 uses a singular suffix in **בְּצַלְמוֹ**.
  - Third, God would be speaking using the “royal we” or majestic plural.
    - While a single agent is planning to act, he speaks in the plural.

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<sup>4</sup> Pratico and Van Pelt, §18.13.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, s §3.3.3.

- The linguistic effect exaggerates the high office of the one speaking.
- Advocates of this view sometimes appeal to the plural form of אֱלֹהִים itself.
- The object: man
  - אָדָם is the direct object of God's creative activity.
    - This is important to recognize, especially once we encounter alternative theories of human origins.
    - The specific and *direct* object of God's creation with respect to the reproduction of his image is *man*.
    - The structuring of the Genesis account portrays a particular order that elevates the importance of man as compared to the rest of creation.
      - Days 1–3 describe the creation of kingdoms or realms. Days 4–6 describe the creation of rulers to rule over those kingdoms.
        - Day 1 (vv. 3–5) | Day 4 (vv. 14–19) —Light and Darkness > the sun, moon, and stars
        - Day 2 (vv. 6–8) | Day 5 (vv. 20–23) —The water under the expanse and the skies > living creatures in the water and birds in the sky
        - Day 3A (vv. 9–10) | Day 6A (vv. 24–25) —dry ground > living creatures on the land
        - Day 3B (vv. 11–13) | Day 6B (vv. 26–31) —vegetation and trees > creation of man
      - Man, however, seems to transcend the rest of creation.
        - The pattern moves from kingdom to king. Man is the last of the created kings, which emphasizes his preeminence among creation.
        - More than that, he is explicitly given dominion over the creation in v. 26b and v. 28.
    - But again, man is also elevated by being the direct object of the cohortative נַעֲשֶׂה.
- The form/pattern: in *our* image; in *God's* image
  - [נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ] (Gen 1:26).
  - Man is created in the image and likeness of God. This refers to the created ectype, not some aspect of the divine archetype. God does not have an image-aspect that man is created after. Man is the created image of God.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bavinck, 2:532.

- We'll look at this in much more detail, but at this point, let us look closely at the relationship between “image” and “likeness.”
  - **בְּצַלְמֵנוּ** has a prepositional **בְּ** and a plural ending.
  - **בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ** shares the same form, but with the prepositional **בְּ**.
  - Some interpreters see this latter phrase as exegetical.
  - Others see this as saying something additional about the nature of man and how he was created. That is, some traditions have distinguished between the image and the likeness.
    - A naturalist view holds that God planned to create man in his image and likeness. However, he only created him in his image with the intent that he would obtain the divine likeness through obedience. The likeness is eschatological whereas the image is not properly so.
    - Another view holds that the image of God is demonstrated in man's rationality, but the likeness of God is an additional gift of holiness lost by sin and restored by Christ.
    - Pelagius taught that the image of God was a God-given potential for moral perfection.<sup>7</sup>
    - The Socinians held that the image of God was merely man's dominion over creation.
- The mode: divine fiat
  - A fiat is “a formal authorization or decree”<sup>8</sup> or “a command or act of will that creates something without or as if without further effort.”<sup>9</sup>
    - With reference to God's creative Word, the accomplishment of such a decree requires no acting agent. The speaking and the doing are simultaneous, co-existent events.
    - Fiat is clearly apparent in Genesis 1:3, “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” God spoke and it was.
  - In a similar fashion, Genesis 1:27 is very matter of fact even though it bears poetic form.
  - Theistic evolution is one position that seeks to fill in the supposed gaps of the biblical record.
    - The advocate of theistic evolution views that God created the world—even *ex nihilo*. But the creation of much life has come about by a providentially-guided process of evolution.
      - God set the pieces in motion, but the creation of man is not directly of divine fiat.

<sup>7</sup> Bavinck, 2:534.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=define%20fiat>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fiat>

- Some advocates see man as a series in a chain of species that have evolved. At a point in time, God chose one of these hominids and breathed his life into him, making him a living being and establishing God’s image in him.
- For a good summary of such views, read Richard Belcher’s review of C. John Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?* online at Reformation21.<sup>10</sup>
- The first major problem is that theistic evolution is contrary to the explicit teaching of Scripture.
  - Genesis 2:7 says God created man of the dust of the ground, not from animals.
  - 1 Corinthians 15:39 corroborates this basic point: “For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.”
- While the exegetical issues are substantial, there are still other issues that pose a difficulty for theistic evolution.
- The means: dust of the ground.
  - Genesis 2:7
    - <sup>2:7</sup> 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.
    - וַיִּצְרֵן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה
    - There is a play on words between the object of creation (הָאָדָם) and his local origin (הָאֲדָמָה).
  - The apostle Paul draws an important lesson from this statement of origin by developing it in 1 Corinthians 15:47–49.
    - <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.
    - <sup>47</sup> ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. <sup>48</sup> οἷος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι. <sup>49</sup> καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου.
  - God created man’s body of the dust and his souls of nothing—a new substance. He breathed life into the body and it became a “living soul.” Christ, however, became “life-giving Spirit.”

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/did-adam-and-eve-really-exist-a-review.php>

- Basic summary of 1 Corinthians 15:42–49
  - Paul compares the glory of the resurrected Christ to:
    - The believer’s body of death (vv. 42–44)
    - Adam’s body or mode of existence before the Fall (vv. 45–49).
  - In *both cases* Paul maintains that when compared to the imperishable glory and power of the resurrected Christ, Adam’s pre-Fall body as well as his post-Fall body are σῶμα ψυχικόν natural bodies.
  - In other words, Adam’s prelapsarian body is closer in mode of existence to his fallen body of death than the glorified body of the resurrected Christ.
  - Furthermore, the glory and permanence of the Spiritual resurrection order, that is inaugurated and consummated by Christ, is inherent and implicit in the Adamic order.
- In verses 42–44 Paul compares and contrasts the body of death and the body of resurrection.
  - The body of death is *sown* perishable (v. 42), in dishonor (v. 43), and in weakness (v. 43). It is a physical body (v. 44a).
  - The resurrected body is *raised* imperishable (v. 42), in glory (v. 43), and in power (v. 43). It will be a spiritual body (v. 44a).
- This should be simple enough to follow. Dead bodies are subject to perishability, dishonor, and weakness. Glorified bodies are precisely the opposite.
  - However, Paul’s argument takes an important turn in v. 44b, when he begins to compare the body of death to Adam’s pre-Fall body.
  - Verse 44b begins a new argument by starting a new protasis/apodosis pair (Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν).
    - This marks a new comparison.
    - Notwithstanding, the protasis continues to be concerned with the σῶμα ψυχικόν while the apodosis is concerned with σῶμα πνευματικόν.
  - And in verse 45, Paul appeals to the creation of Adam, necessarily *before the Fall*.
    - “The first man Adam became a living being” (cf. Gen 2:7).
    - Paul’s argument turns on an eschatological point: that the natural body presupposes the existence and offer of the Spiritual body. Eschatology precedes soteriology, because protology presupposes eschatology.