

## Osaka International Church

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Series: Beginnings #5

Title: The First Image

Scripture: Genesis 1:24-31

### I. Introduction

Good morning! We have been working our way through chapter one of Genesis for several weeks, and today we have come to Day #6, the climax of God's creative activity. In our study, we have looked at several approaches to interpretation but, in all of these approaches, one conclusion is inescapable. The Bible clearly teaches that mankind is the masterpiece of God's creative work. The creation of the heavens and the earth, and of all the plants and animals are preamble and preparation leading up to the creation of humankind. But rather than making us proud of our high position, the knowledge that we are the pinnacle of God's creation should humble us as we realize that all we are comes from the hand of God. Let's begin by reading Genesis 1:24-31.



### II. Scripture: Genesis 1:24-31 (NIV)

[24] And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.

[25] God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. [26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

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

[28] God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." [29] Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. [30] And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so. [31] God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

### III. Teaching

Before we go into the details of this passage, I would like to introduce one more approach to interpreting the overall account of creation, the Literal Day Theory. The Literal Day Theory argues that the six days of creation and also the seventh day of rest are literal 24-hour days. There are four major variations of the Literal Day Theory, so for awareness I will mention all four, but then we will focus on one version.

1. The first version, says that the days are literal, but that they are days of revelation, not creation. The idea is that God revealed the history of creation to Moses in six days of visions and that Moses recorded each vision as a day.
2. The second version says that creation occurred in six literal days, but that the days are separated by long periods of time.
3. The third version says that there are six literal and consecutive days, but they are days of restoration after destruction, not original creation. This version is an

#### Four Literal 24-Hour Day Theories

1. Six Days of Visions
2. Six Days with gaps in between
3. Six Days of Restoration
4. Six Consecutive Days

#### 四つの文字通り24時間の日の考え方

1. 六日間の幻
2. 六つの日、その間に間隔がある
3. 六日間の回復
4. 連続の六日間

expansion of the Gap Theory, which proposes that there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, during which Satan fell, so that life and much of the earth was destroyed and had to be restored.

4. The fourth version says that the six days are literal and consecutive and that all God's creative work occurred during these six days. This version is often called the Young Earth Theory, since it leads to a very recent date for the creation of the heavens and the earth.

This last version is probably the most famous because advocates of the Young Earth Theory have been in the newspapers a lot in recent years, especially in the United States. Here are a few of the points commonly cited by advocates of the Literal 24-Hour Day.

- The Bible should be taken literally. Therefore, when it says, "day," it means day.
- Hebrew grammar and word usage indicate that the days are literal and consecutive.
- In the Ten Commandments, the wording of Exodus 20:11 indicates that the days are literal.

**Exodus 20:11** says, **"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."** For a variety of reasons, I find other interpretations of Genesis more convincing, but I do have to agree that Exodus 20:11 seems to support the consecutive and Literal Six Day view. Next week, we will review and compare the various interpretations a little more, but for today it is time to move on to other things. Let's take a closer look at some key verses in today's Scripture.

**Genesis 1:25**, **"God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good."** The next time that you read a news story or scientific article that mentions the division of animals and plants into various categories, such as species, genus, and orders, you may wish to remember that these systems of classification were largely inspired by the Bible's description of God creating His creatures, **"according to their kinds."**



God created the animal and plant kingdoms with a plan; there is organization in God's kingdom. Many Christians would say that the basic categories that God established at the time of creation cannot be changed. For example, some Christians accept the idea that lions, tigers, leopards, and house cats all evolved from a common ancestor, but reject the idea that cats and dogs could have a common ancestor. Other Christians draw the line in different places, perhaps accepting that all carnivores have a common ancestor, or even accepting most of the ideas of evolution. However, all Christians need to reject the idea that life is the result of random chance. Whatever processes He may have used, God created all things. The world is not the result of random chance; it was designed and created by God.

**Genesis 1:26**, **"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.""** Here we see two very important truths and one deep mystery. The first truth is that man is made in the image of God. And the second truth is that man is to rule over the earth. This idea of ruling has two major aspects, authority and responsibility. Because mankind has authority over the earth, mankind is also responsible for properly caring for the earth. For this reason, Christians should be aware of and active in their concern for environmental issues. Of course, there are many opinions about what should and should not be done. But the Bible does teach us that taking care of the planet is part of our original responsibility.



The mystery in Genesis 1:26 is that God refers to Himself in the plural, saying, **"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness"**. This is an extraordinary statement. And the statement is made even more extraordinary when we look also at the following verse. **Genesis 1:27** **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."**

Who is speaking to whom when it says, **"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness"**? This

cannot be God speaking to the angels, because God and the angels have no common likeness. But if God is speaking to Himself, why would He use the plural form? And, why would God speak to Himself anyway? There certainly cannot be more than one God, because in the next verse we see that God is once again singular, as all of the Bible testifies. But how can God make man, **“in our likeness,”** and **“in His own image”**? Genesis 1:26 and 1:27 teach us something amazing, both God and man are simultaneously singular and plural.

At the beginning of our study of Genesis, I said that Genesis 1:1 by itself refutes all systems of religion and philosophy that do not accept the existence of a single all-powerful God. And when we talked about it, we found that basically, that eliminates almost everything except Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. If you believe in Genesis 1:1 and have the courage of your convictions, you almost have to be a Jew, Muslim, or Christian. And at the time I also said that before we finished the first chapter of Genesis, that we would see that only Christianity is fully compatible with what Genesis teaches.

Many people have tried to find other explanations for the mysterious words of Genesis 1:26-27, but I think that only the Christian doctrine of the Trinity adequately explains these verses. Only the doctrine of the Trinity explains how God can be both plural and singular, why God speaks to Himself, and how human beings are also both plural and singular, in the image of God. God is one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And human beings are body, soul, and spirit, yet one person. The Trinity is stamped on every person.

Other ways in which humankind displays the image of God include our capacity for selfless love, our ability and drive for creating new things, our understanding of right and wrong, and our longing for spiritual connection. But, of course, an image is not the same as the original. But the honor of being the only creatures made in God’s own image is still amazing. As images of God, we are able to have a full and rewarding relationship with God.



In all of creation, only people are made in the image of God. We are different than animals in very profound ways, because of this. **Genesis 2:7** tells us, **“the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”** God made the animals, and in a sense the animals are alive. But only mankind is a living being in the sense that Genesis 2:7 speaks of, which refers to, I think, spiritual life. By the way, some people are confused by Genesis 2 and think that it is a second creation account. But if we understand that Genesis chapter 2 is mostly a more detailed version of the events of Day #6, then there is no problem. We will talk about this more when we study the Garden of Eden.

God loves us; He created us in His image, and He provides for our needs. **Genesis 1:29**, **“Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”** Here God provides food for our bodies, but He also provides for our spiritual needs as well. It is interesting that apparently human beings were originally vegetarians. After Noah’s flood, God gives the animals for food also, but before that, people were to be vegetarians.

#### IV. Closing

**Genesis 1:31**, **“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.”** God is a loving God and He created all things good. Sadly, our sins has separated us from God. But just as God met our need for food for our bodies, God also meets our spiritual need. While He was on this earth, our Lord Jesus confronted sin and death and won the victory, even paying the price for our sins on the cross. As Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, He also says to us, **John 4:14**, **“whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”** God created us as spiritual beings with a need for spiritual sustenance. And through Jesus, God meets our need, offering us spiritual drink, bringing eternal life.



#### V. Closing Prayer