

People: God's Handiwork¹



SABBATH—OCTOBER 13

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1:27; Genesis 1:26; Mark 12:13–17; Genesis 2:19–25; Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12–19.

MEMORY VERSE: “I want you to realize that the LORD is God. He made us, and we belong to him” (Psalm 100:3, NIV).

KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT: God created people in His own image. Sin spoiled that image. God's plan is to restore (bring back) that image in us.

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY THINKER, ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, WAS THINKING deeply about what it means to be a human being (a person). He accidentally bumped into someone on the street. The person whom he hit angrily demanded, “Who do you think you are?”

“Who am I?” Schopenhauer responded. “I wish I knew.”

Who am I? Who are we as humans? What are we doing here? How did we get here, and why? These are very old questions that humans still debate today. But the Bible answers them all. That is because there is a very strong connection between humans and Creation. No other Bible doctrine (teaching) is as important to our understanding of humans and Creation. This is because it focuses (puts our attention) on our *beginning* and how we came to be.

Evolution² is not like Creation at all. It argues that our lives have no purpose (reason). (In other words, we are here by chance alone.) But the Bible teaches that we were created by God. Evolution and Creation are two very different teachings. Both give opposite ideas about how life started on earth and about who we as humans are.

1. handiwork—the product or thing that someone makes.

2. evolution—a theory that the differences between modern plants and animals were caused by changes that happened by a natural process over a very long time.

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 14**CREATION AND HUMAN BEGINNINGS (Genesis 1:27)**

What does Genesis 1:27 tell us about our beginnings that is so different from other views of human beginnings, such as evolution?

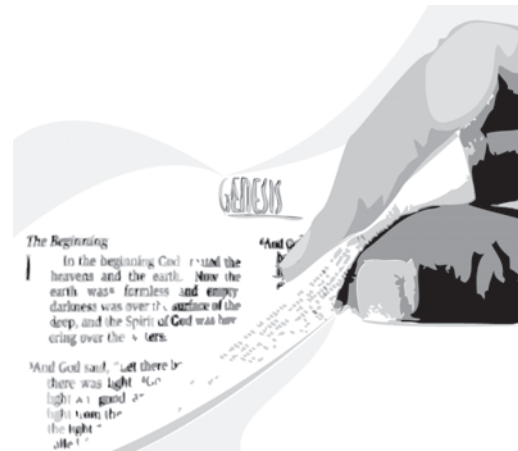
It is not possible to miss the point that God created humans with a real purpose in mind. The Bible leaves no room for any idea of chance. We were given a real purpose in life and a special nature (who someone is) right from the start.

Being made “in the image of God” means being made for a real and clear purpose. This point is important because some thinkers have argued that humans have to create their own meaning, their own purpose. This is because, they argue, we come without any meaning or purpose for ourselves. For example, if evolution were true, one could argue that there is no purpose to life because we came into life by accident. But the Bible teaches that we were carefully planned, made in the image of God and created to bring glory (praise and honor) to Him.

Beginnings deal with history. Read Jude 14; Romans 5:12–21; and 1 Corinthians 15:20–22. How do these verses help us to understand that Adam was a real person who lived on earth, according to Genesis 1, 2? Why is it important to understand Adam as a historical person?

It is amazing how many Bible thinkers do not believe that Adam was real. They say that Adam is a myth (fable), a symbol for all people on earth, but not a real person. One can hold those beliefs only through greatly (really) twisting the verses themselves, both in the Old and New Testaments.

Think about the fact that you were made in the image of God. What should that tell you about your own built-in self-worth, no matter what faults and weaknesses you have?



Those who believe Adam is a myth are twisting Scripture.

MONDAY—OCTOBER 15**THE IMAGE OF GOD: PART 1 (Genesis 1:26)**

As we saw yesterday, Adam and Eve were real people, not symbols (word-pictures) or myths. They were flesh and blood, made “in the image of God.” Clearly, being made in the image of God is something good and something special. And it is something

that makes us valuable. But, what does it really mean?

Read Genesis 1:26 carefully. God says that human beings are to be made in His image. What happens as a result of that? And how does that help us to understand the meaning of “the image of God”?

Genesis 1:26 is God's statement of intention. God creates humanity in His image and then commands him to do something. Being created in God's image appears to be necessary for a certain kind of work. For example, humanity is to have “dominion [control]” over the rest of what God created. So, “the image of God” points to the physical, mental, social, and spiritual gifts that people need to best serve God's purpose. “Dominion over” the rest of Creation certainly requires respect, care, and good stewardship (management). People are to work in a special way with other living things, such as animals. This should show how God works with humans themselves. Being made in the image of God also means that humans are to represent God in the world.

What a responsibility!

Read Mark 12:13–17. How do these verses help us to understand what it means to be made in God's image?

Jesus' useful advice seems to be, “ ‘Give your money to Caesar. It has his image on it. So it belongs to him. But give yourselves to God.

You bear his image, and you belong to him.’ ”—Adapted from Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology [Study of Who God Is]* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1998), page 515.

How can we make this advice useful in our lives? We can show that we have God's image in our love, faithfulness, and loyalty to Him and in our treatment of others. Again, being made in the image of God is something shown by our actions.



Being made in “the image of God” points to the many gifts God gives us to serve Him.

TUESDAY—OCTOBER 16

**THE IMAGE OF GOD: PART 2
(Genesis 2:19, 20)**

Whatever else it means to be “made in the image of God,” it also shows that we were made to be in relationships. What are those relationships? And how should we act in them?

Read Genesis 2:19, 20. What does it tell us right away about people's relationship to the world?

Notice the freedom given to Adam here. Adam is to name the creatures that God created. God does not do the naming Himself. He leaves that work to Adam. The verse suggests that God is going to accept whatever names Adam gives to the living things.

Read Genesis 2:20–25. How do these verses show more about the relationships of those who were made in God's image?

A lot has been written over many hundreds of years about the meaning of these verses. What is fascinating here is the closeness between Adam and Eve. Adam is created out of the ground and Eve out of Adam (something that helps to separate her from every other earthly living thing). To be made in God's image certainly means close and loving relationships (something that surely shows the relationship in the Godhead itself).



Eve is created out of Adam to show how close a husband and wife are meant to be.

Now study Genesis 1:27 together with Genesis 3:20 and Acts 17:26. How do these verses show unity (oneness) between the first pair (Adam and Eve) and all human beings that would ever live? What does the unity of people have to say about political and ethical³ issues such as justice and racism?

WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 17

A SPOILED IMAGE (Romans 5:12–19)

One of the many great problems for those who believe in evolution is accepting the Bible story of the Fall. In the Bible, the world and people were perfect when created. Only through sin did suffering and death enter the world. Both of these ideas disagree with evolutionary teaching. Evolution teaches that suffering and death are part of the process (method) of creation itself.

Imagine what it would say about God's character (who God is) if He created us in the way that evolution teaches. This would mean that God uses violence, selfishness, and control of the strong over the weak in order to create a perfect and unselfish person, who then "falls" into a state of violence, selfishness, and a desire for control over the weak. Then this is a kind of condition from which the person would have to be saved or else he or she would face final punishment.

Think, too, of what evolution does

3. ethical—dealing with what is right and wrong in society.

to the plan of salvation. Suppose the Lord had chosen to be born as a human, who was really an evolved (slowly developed) ape. So as an evolved ape, He would have come to remove death, “the last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26). But how can death be the “enemy” when it was one of God’s chosen methods for creating humans? The Lord would have needed to go through many dead cavemen and other groups of evolved apes before He could finally get one creature (man) into His own image. So, Jesus comes to save people from the very method God used to create people in the first place? The whole idea is very foolish and does not follow the Bible!

Read Romans 5:12–19 and Colossians 3:10. How do these verses help us to understand what sin has done to people? How does the theme of the great controversy (war) fit into this whole picture? Read 1 John 3:8.

Sin has touched all parts of human life, and even the earth itself. Ellen G. White talks about three curses that have rested on the world. The first curse resulted from Adam’s fall. The next curse happened after Cain’s murder of Abel. The third curse followed the damage caused by the Flood. Bible thinkers also talk about “total depravity.” This means that every part of a human being’s life has been damaged by sin. As we look around at

the world, and even at ourselves, it is not hard to see that, is it?

Some believe that violence, suffering, and death were all part of how God created people. Others believe that violence, suffering, and death were all part of how Satan tries to destroy people whom God has created. Think about the differences in the character of God that these two opposing views present.

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 18

RESTORATION⁴ (Romans 8:29)

The results of sin have been terrible on earth. But there is still hope. The Bible speaks about the renewal and restoration of the image of God in us.

Study carefully Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Ephesians 4:23, 24. What hope is offered in these verses?

The Bible clearly holds up the hope for us to be remade in God’s image. But none of this is the result of our own works. The Bible points to Christ as the basis (foundation) of hope for our renewal. Whatever changes are made in our lives, our hope of salvation must depend always on what Christ has done for us. The offer of salvation is based on His righteousness (holy life), not our own.

4. restoration—the process by which everything on the earth is made new again and made even better than it was before.

How is 2 Corinthians 5:17 connected with the re-creation of humans in God's image? Does being a new person put that person beyond the reach of sin and its results on the human experience? What does your own experience tell you about the answer?

The Bible tells us that we need to be always watchful in the spiritual war with Satan. It is the war between the flesh and the spirit (Galatians 5:16, 17). Those who are being renewed in God's image find this spiritual war very real in the human experience. So they accept the challenge in the strength of the Lord (Ephesians 6:10–13). If we, too, choose to be remade in the image of God, then we place ourselves on the side of God in the great controversy. Ellen G. White writes about those who have experienced the renewing power of Christ. She says, "Because this experience is his, the Christian must not sit back and be comfortable with what has been done for him. He who has determined to enter the spiritual kingdom will feel all the attacks of Satan against his sinful nature [who someone is]. Each day he must renew his dedication to God. Each day he must do battle with evil. His old habits will try to control him. Against these he is to be always on guard. He needs to work hard in Christ's strength for victory."—Adapted from *The Acts of the Apostles [Teachers and Leaders]*, pages 476, 477.



Jesus is the hope for our renewal.

FRIDAY—OCTOBER 19

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, "The Creation," pages 44–51, in *Patriarchs [Leaders and Forefathers] and Prophets [Special Messengers]*.

"In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect unity [oneness] with the nature and the law of God. The principles [important rules] of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin separated him from his God. He no longer showed God's image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law. 'The sinful mind is at war with God. It does not obey God's law. It can't [cannot]' (Romans 8:7, NIV). But 'God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son' (John 3:16, NIV). In this way man might be restored to God. Through Christ, man can be restored to unity with his God. Man's heart must be renewed by God's grace.⁵ He must have a new life from

5. grace—God's gift of forgiveness and mercy that He gives us to take away our sins.

above. This change is the new birth. Without being born again, Jesus says, 'no one can see God's kingdom' (John 3:3, NIV).”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 467.

“The true goal of education is to restore the image of God in the soul. In the beginning God created man in His own likeness. God gave man a noble character [who someone is]. His mind was well balanced. All of man's powers were in unity with God. But man's Fall and its results have spoiled these gifts. Sin has spoiled and almost removed the image of God in man. So God developed the plan of salvation to restore His image to man. And a life of probation [testing] was given to man.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 595.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① How does the teaching of evolution fit into the theme of the great con-

troversy? How has Satan used this doctrine (teaching) to destroy faith in the Bible?

② Go through the New Testament. Look up all the verses that talk about Adam. How clear is it that the New Testament writers all believed that Adam was a real person? Why is that so important to our understanding of who we are, how we got into our situation, and the hope that we have in Jesus?

③ Think more about the idea of being restored into God's image. How does God plan for us to understand renewal, especially as we become sick, grow old, and die?

④ Two of the most important teachings in physics—quantum theory⁶ and general relativity⁷—do not agree with each other. What should that tell us about how careful we must be when accepting what science tells us?

6. quantum theory—a theory in physics that is based on the idea that energy (such as light) is made of small, separate units.

7. general relativity—a theory in physics that considers mass and energy to be equal, and states that a moving object will experience changes in mass, size, and time, that are related to its speed and are not noticeable except at speeds approaching that of light.