

CHAPTER 2

CREATING



IN THE BEGINNING OF TIME, the triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—spoke the world into existence. Sun, moon, and stars appeared. Land and seas were divided. Animals, birds, and fish were designed in all their unique and breathtaking beauty. Everything needed was created and placed with Divine order. But God desired one thing more to complete His creation ...

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image—in the image of God He created him—male and female He created them.¹²

God was saying, “We desire more! We want to design the highest creatures with the highest purpose.” The nature of God’s design for this man and woman showed His plan and delight for us to be with Him, for us to enjoy an unbroken, personal relationship with Him. Our design and purpose and His presence are intricately linked. He didn’t have to create us, but He made us ... to be with Him.

Like Him

Unlike all the other creatures, we were made in God’s image. As such, we have a soul and spirit that mirrors Him. A mind that can think,

¹²Genesis 1:26–27

ears that hear, eyes that see, and a mouth that speaks—all so we can communicate with Him.

We were made like Him so we could live with Him and experience His presence. If we had not been made in His image, this relationship would have never occurred.

Like Him ... With Personality

Because we are made in God's image, we have the characteristics of personality that He has. We too can think, reason, communicate, and create. We have emotions that feel and a will that decides. This personhood, uniquely created in us *by* God and *like* God, is placed there so we can be *with* God, so we can live joyfully in His presence.

God is a person, and in the deep of His mighty nature He thinks, wills, enjoys, feels, loves, desires, and suffers as any other person may. In making Himself known to us He stays by the familiar pattern of personality. He communicates with us through the avenues of our minds, our wills, and our emotions. The continuous and unembarrassed interchange of love and thought between God and the soul of the redeemed man is the throbbing heart of New Testament religion.

... You and I are in little (our sins excepted) what God is in large. Being made in His image we have within us the capacity to know Him. In our sins, we lack only the power. The moment the Spirit has quickened us to life in regeneration our whole being senses its kinship to God and leaps up in joyous recognition. ... It is, however, not an end but an inception, for now begins the glorious pur-

suit, the heart's happy exploration of the infinite riches of the Godhead.¹³

Like Him ... With Purpose

God made us like He is so we could join Him in what He does. In His first statement about us, God defined our purpose: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule.'"¹⁴

God is a ruler; He rules over everything that exists. When He created the earth, God desired for His image bearers to rule over this creation ... to rule just like He does, with righteousness, justice, wisdom, grace, order, authority, and love.

He wants us to rule in multiple arenas. We are to oversee creation, ourselves, our families, our churches, our communities, our nations.

What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands. You have put all things under his feet.¹⁵

No human could do this alone, and so we are to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."¹⁶ Each of us is given a specific sphere in which to exercise this godly leadership. Whether we realize it or not, we have been given a realm of creation over which to rule.

But we are unable to do this properly without a personal relationship with God. Left to our own, we are sinful rulers. We cannot rule

¹³The Pursuit of God, A.W. Tozer, Moody, Chicago, ILL., 2015.

¹⁴Genesis 1:26

¹⁵Psalms 8:4-6

¹⁶Genesis 1:22

rightly if we are separated from His presence. Our world has felt this tragic dissonance as we have tried to rule independently.

The very fact that we were created with this Divine purpose indicates that we were made to live in His presence. We cannot fulfill our purpose without His nearness. Again, God made us like He is, so we could join Him in what He does.

Like Him ... In a Place

Places are important. Everything we do occurs in a place and is shaped by that environment. God created places, and He has a particular use for them.

God is omnipresent, and we are not, but He made a place for man—an exquisite Garden. This was not just a place for men and women; it was a place where God would also be. It was to be a *shared* space. He designed it so both He and man had access to this place and could walk and talk there with each other. These beginning days for Adam and Eve were exactly what God desired ... a perfect place shared with His perfect presence and His beautifully created beings.

Can you imagine the glory of physically walking with God in that pristine place? If you can, then get ready, for there's coming something even more spectacular at the end of the story.

This first Garden indicates that we were made to experience His *continual, daily* presence. Why else would God design it this way if our presence with Him was not His great delight and our greatest need?

He wants to be with us!

Even man's fall could not destroy God's plan for a place with His constant presence. We will see His unfolding blueprint, creating many

places of His presence but culminating in another more glorious and eternal garden.

Unlike Him ... Dependent on Him

There is one way, however, in which we are dramatically different from God. We are not God, and therefore we need Him. We were designed to operate in close, personal intimacy and dependency upon Him. Without His presence, we are deficient in every way.

Every man and woman mightily used by God understands this. David said, "You are my Lord. I have no good besides You."¹⁷ Peter cried out when Jesus asked him if he was going to leave, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."¹⁸

Jesus taught His disciples—and all of us—this dependency through an unforgettable word picture.

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.¹⁹

The agnostic, C.S. Lewis, who became one of the greatest apologists of his generation, stated this clearly in his classic book, *Mere Christianity*.

God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our

¹⁷Psalm 16:2

¹⁸John 6:68–69

¹⁹John 15:5

spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there.²⁰

We must have His nearness—daily, hourly—to function properly. Our most significant failures come when we forget this and pridefully try to operate on our own. Remember, His presence is our greatest need, and our presence is His great desire.

Satan's Foundational Attack

We don't know the exact details of how Satan gained his temporary authority over the world, but we know it is real and exists under the sovereign authority and purposes of God.

But imagine the devil's terror when men and women were made in God's image. He knew the first parents would multiply and the world would be filled with beings in God's image that would threaten his rule.

But he also knew that everything depended upon these humans walking with God. They must be in His presence to function properly. And so, our adversary had one agenda: to separate us from God's presence. Through a big lie and devious temptation, he enticed Adam and Eve to doubt and disobey God, knowing that their sin would detach them—and us—from God. And he succeeded. Adam and Eve lost intimacy with God.

This will always be Satan's primary ploy. He knows that if we are separated from the presence of God, then not only will we not be ruling

²⁰Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, New York, NY, 1980.

well and seeing God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven, but we will bring evil and darkness into the world, advancing Satan's evil designs. James even states that if we are friends of the world, we are enemies of God, opposing His purposes.²¹

Not only do God's creative plans indicate we were made for His presence, but Satan's attack reveals the same. We are powerful in God's presence but weak, vulnerable, and sinful without Him. We often forget this, but Satan never does.

We must realize that every attack from the enemy upon our lives is an attempt to pull us away, to distract us from the presence of God. As my friend Daniel Henderson often says, "Satan doesn't have to destroy us; he just has to distract us."

But Satan's attack in the Garden would not thwart God's desire. Our adversary won a momentary victory.

But the story was just beginning.

²¹James 4:4