



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy, part I

Genesis 1:1-2:25

Eschatology Doctrinal Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Well, it's 7:30. Let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the opportunity again to study the Scriptures. We thank Thee that, as the apostle said, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable; profitable for instruction, for reproof, for correction, for the life of righteousness that we may be pleasing to Thee in what we say and what we do. We thank Thee for the living nature of the Scriptures and that they objectively bring with them the conviction brought to us through the Holy Spirit, that they are the word of God, possessed of the power and adequacy that one might expect from God's word. And we thank Thee especially for the Holy Spirit's internal testimony to us in bringing us to the acceptance of the word of God and into the enjoyment of the salvation that is ours through Christ.

We are grateful, Lord. We pray that Thy blessing may be upon us as we study and that the power and efficacy of the Holy Scriptures may continue to minister to us. We pray for each one in this auditorium to that end and others who may later hear the tape of the study this evening. We commit our time to Thee.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Well, this is the first of a series of a few studies in “The Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy.” And what I would like to do is to take largely an overview of the story of the Bible. And so we will begin with creation, and we will move all the way through to the time of the new creation, and we'll do it rather rapidly but hitting upon the points that seem, to me at least, to be very important. We'll deal with the prophetic side of it. We'll also deal or try to deal with the moral application of the prophetic word as well.

Back in my earlier Christian experience, one of the things that I studied was God's plan of the ages. And essentially it was a study of the dispensational system of theology. And then later on I used to teach God's plan of the ages in Bible study classes -- well, in preaching too, but in Bible study classes which I conducted in many homes in Dallas many years ago. And what I'm doing is something of the same thing except I'm looking at it now from thirty-five years later, and there are some things that I think I see a little differently. I think I see a little more clearly. And I wanted to incorporate them into this series.

I had mentioned perhaps last time that I had been asked by a conference in Canada this fall or in September, the first week of September, to give a series of messages to them in a study conference, and I had chosen last year this, so I'm practicing on you. But it's a great subject and a great study. If we were looking at this in the scientific, theological way and the academic way, we would call it something like the History of Salvation According to Scripture. And if we want something real technical we could call it *Heilsgeschichte*, and we would be looking at in that sense. But the term or the title The Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy, I think comes as close to what I would like to do as I possibly can.

Now, I'm going to read a few passages from the book of Genesis and, unfortunately, a few weeks ago I did read Genesis 2:18 through 25. And I am going to read it again, but we are going to look at some of the other passages, also. If I had thought at that time that I would do this, I would not have done that or this, but I don't think it will hurt you for us to read these passages over again, and there are some new ones as well. So I'm going to pick out a few texts in the first two chapters of Genesis to read them, and the first is Genesis chapter 1, verse 1 through verse 3. And Moses writes,

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light;' and there was light."

Now I would like for you to note, look on down to verse 26 and we read through verse 28.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

And Chapter 2 in verse 7.

“And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

And now we read our final passage, verse 18 through 25 again.

“And the LORD God said, ‘*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

And Adam said: ‘This *is* now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

Well, the question with which I would begin is the simple question, is there such a thing as a divine purpose? In reading the Bible, can we prove or can we be reasonably certain from the word of God that there is such a thing as a divine purpose, because if we are going to talk about the divine purpose, we ought to have some biblical justification for it. And I do think, of course, that we do have that justification.

And one of the passages that I think makes it plain that there is such a thing as an eternal purpose is the statement that Paul makes in verse 11 of Ephesians chapter 3 where he writes,

“according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

One might also ask, well, what is involved in the eternal purpose if there is an eternal purpose? Well, looking only at the epistle to the Ephesians, because the answer to that question would involve the study of the whole Bible, we can at least say something like this; in chapter 1 in verse 4 he has written,

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

Well, we surely can say from that that at least our divine election is one of the purposes of God that goes back to the beginning. Because he says that we were chosen “in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” So that the eternal purpose at least encompasses the salvation of the saints, such as the saints to whom Paul wrote in Ephesians. But then in verse 11 he says something that is even more significant, at least broader, when he writes:

“in him also we have obtained an inheritance being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will.”

So I think it would very easy to reason from that and very sound to reason from that, that so far as the purpose of God is concerned, it encompasses all of the things that

are found in human history because all things are purposed by him. He works all things according to the counsel of his will.

Now, we can make that seem silly by saying “Do you mean to say that he has purposed that the Cowboys should be nine and four or eight and five or five and ten in nineteen hundred and ninety two?” Well, if you want to be silly, I’ll be silly, too. Yes. That’s encompassed within the purpose of God. It’s encompassed within the working of all things according to the counsel of his will. But of course, it’s one of the things of great insignificance. That may hurt some of you to say that. It hurts me probably more, but nevertheless it’s within the purpose of God, everything that happens. And we have reason to believe that the Scriptures support that so that all the experiences of life into which you and I enter, we have some strange experiences and we have some tragic experiences and some experiences of deep suffering, great conflict. Those are also within the eternal purpose of God, determined by our sovereign Lord of the universe.

Now, the Scriptures begin the account of the story of it. It’s *Heilsgeschichte* to use the term and term for history of salvation with creation; the creation of the universe, the creation of man, and the creation of woman. Events that have become big again, even in the last few weeks, events that have become so big that Calvin, not the theologian but the outrageous child scientist of the New Age, calls the events that have happened, the horrendous space cablooney. That’s for the Big Bang. And we’ve been reading about the Big Bang or the horrendous space cablooney, as Calvin of Calvin & Hobbes says.

I was reading last year, I believe, an article by one of the men who writes regularly -- well, it wasn't last year. I take it back. I was reading this magazine, but the article was about ten years ago, written by Russell Kirk, and it had to do with creation. And Mr. Kirk who has written often on conservative matters, wrote about his own evaluation of Dr. Stanley Yake, one of the outstanding scientists of that particular study. We'll talk about that as kind of a philosopher of science. And Dr. Yake had made the point that so far as we can tell, what we call creation did occur.

Now, society is usually exposed only to the musings of Carl Sagan and, consequently, the pictures that he draws or the things that we see, and as a result we don't, as a society, have a very deep knowledge of the things that have to do with the philosophy of science and the things that science has to do with.

William Buckley wrote not long ago in our paper regarding graphs. And I suppose it would apply to other things by which we are given visual pictures of important things. I remember a very brilliant professor who once said to me "no proposition is so simple that it can't be rendered unintelligible to me by putting it on a graph." So it's a warning to us not to believe all the pictures that we see and the graphs that men draw because they don't necessarily tell us what the truth is. Well, anyway, Mr. Kirk concludes his article with these words, "this earth of ours is not a meaningless trap but instead a home, designed for human beings by their creator. One must first say creator in order to say cosmos." Dr. Yake concludes in his most recent book. "That creator even created that Carl Sagan. The Lord knows why," so Mr. Kirk says.

Well, to start on the biblical view of the divine purposes, we have to begin with a creation account in Genesis, because that's the stately portal to the superb structure of Holy Scripture. It's the seed plot of the Bible. It's one of the things that we tell all of our beginning students in Bible study. We're going to turn to the book of Genesis. It's the seed plot of the Bible. And it truly is. In fact, almost all of the great doctrines of the word of God are found right there in the book of Genesis. And if you study it carefully and read it also with the interpretation of our Lord and the apostles that they put upon it, you will discover that it's really true, that Genesis is the seed plot of the Bible, and it's full of the words that the apostles and prophets later on expand in what we know as Christian theology. It's the acorn from which the oak tree of divine theology grows. It's the spring from which the waters of divine salvation flow. And so we're turning to Genesis, and we're going to look briefly at the three things; the creation of the universe, the creation of man, and the creation of the woman. Let's turn to Genesis chapter 1 in verse 1.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Now, obviously we're going to give a summary of the salient points, but here we have the idea of creation; “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” We sum up what the Bible says about it as specifically what this text contributes. Creation is the free act of God; not required by anything, not necessitated by anything other than his manifold wisdom and purpose. It is a free act. It is a temporal act. That is, it occurred in a particular -- at a particular time, and we should look at it as a temporal act that at a point in time past, God did create the heavens and the earth.

Men have often wondered what God was doing before he began to create the heavens and the earth as set forth here. And the great students of the word of God have all thought about that, too. For example, Augustine said with reference to it when he was asked what God was doing before he created the universe, said “he was creating hell for people who ask questions like that.” [laughter] And Luther, who was an Augustinian monk, and therefore no doubt was acquainted with a great deal of Augustine, must have learned from his teacher because he said when asked the same kind of question that “God was cutting switches to flog inquisitive questioners.”

Now, maybe that will help me in that you won't ask me any questions after the hour tonight because you don't want to fall into the company of those people, do you?

Anyway, it's a free temporal act of God, and I'm going to say something that I'd have to defend a little bit more than just say it. And that is it is a *creation ex nihilo*, a Latin expression that means “out of nothing.” Strictly speaking, the Hebrew word that is translated “create” does not of itself mean to create out of nothing. And I think one must acknowledge that. However, while it is true that that word does not of itself mean to create out of nothing, it's also true that it is never used in Scripture with an accusative of

the matter; that is, created out of something specifically. In other words, by the context of its usage in the Bible, it is a word that refers to creation out of nothing.

So when we ask ourselves about the Big Bang and about the little piece of material that was smaller than an atom from which the Big Bang ultimately occurred or in connection with which it occurred, we have to ask the more fundamental question: if such were true, -- and we don't really know that that's true -- then where did that original bit of material come from in the first place? It's not enough to say the earth began with a Big Bang, which is defined as the explosion of some particular piece of material that is smaller than an atom. One must ask from whence has come that?

So creation is a free act. It's a temporal act. It's an act in which God creates out of nothing. It is the act of the Triune God. We read here, for example, that “God created the heavens and the earth.” We read in verse 2 that the “Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” And then in verse three, we read “then God said let there be light.”

Now, to fully justify what I'm going to say we would need to exegete through other passages of the Bible but -- because the term God of itself must be understood in the light of the context, God may refer to the father, God may refer to the Son, God may refer to the Spirit. And so when we talk about the Trinity, we're talking about God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit.

Now, it so happens in this text that we have “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” We have the “Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters” as further creative work continues, and then we read “then God said.” And we read in the Gospel of John that all things came into being through the word of God. And it's not an interpretation without support to say that “then God spoke” is a reference ultimately to the word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. So we have God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit involved in the creation. I don't think that there is any debate over that with

regard to people who believe the Bible, but it is possible that that is really the ultimate sense of verses 1 through 3. It's a triune activity in creating.

And of course it's for his glory. And it issues independent, yet distinct beings; dependent in the sense that every created thing or person is ultimately dependent upon God. How important that is for you and me to remember; that we are dependent beings by creation. We are not independent. We are dependent. We are dependent upon God and ultimately our true freedom lies in our recognition of our dependence and our service of the Lord in our dependence; not independence, dependence. That's what we are. So what we have then is a unique activity on the part of God, the act of Creation.

All of you who have listened to me for a long time know that I get disturbed over the term “create” being applied to anything that men do. And yet it is so common for us to steal things that belong to God; steal his attributes if we possibly could and to speak of individuals as creative. Well, what we really mean, if we are opposed by a theologian, ultimately comes out of the original thinking sort of guy. It is probably true, that not a person in this room has ever created anything.

I have a story of a professor of philosophy who shouted at one of his pupils “You have no imagination, you can create nothing.” And this individual thought him very unkind and so he hotly denied the charge in front of the class. And with a smile the professor told him to go to the blackboard and draw something creatively or creative, a creation. So with a smile, this boy went to the blackboard and thought he would get back at his teacher and so he concocted the head of the professor, the body of a pig, the wings of an eagle, the tail of a fish, and the legs of a deer. The students giggled but the professor regarded it with disdain. You see he said, “You've imagined nothing. All you've done is to take the parts you've observed and rearranged them.” That's all anyone can do. Only God creates, man rearranges.

Well, I think that's the sense of this text when we read “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It was something absolutely unique; not like

Rembrandt's Night Watch which is unique among other paintings but not really ultimately unique, not that but even more.

Now, the theories that have to do with creation we'll pass by. You're familiar with dualistic theories. Any kind of dualistic theory denies infinity to God because if there are two infinite beings, there is a limitation on one of those beings or both of them, and so one cannot say he is infinite or unbounded. That's why the Christian church has never followed any philosophy that embraced dualism because it really is ultimately destruction of Christian thinking.

Emanations, evolution, all of those things, the Christians have generally abstained from and some of them necessarily abstain from. So the idea then of the creation is that God has created the creation as a triune act, freely. And individuals who are created are dependent upon God. What we have is not the chance outcome of random movements of matter.

Now, when we talk about theories of creation and talk about science and philosophies of science, most of us -- or I shouldn't speak for you, but I speak for myself that, ultimately, I am lost because my training is not in that, and I am unable to follow it. I read the TIME account of the Big Bang and even the account in TIME magazine contains many things that I do not really fully understand, at least the words. So I must confess that I always turn to the book of Genesis with quite a sense of relief. And when I realize that this is divine revelation, then I have further relief. So the almighty God, to sum it up, created *ex nihilo*; the space, mass, time, universe.

Now, there are some creative transitions. If you will look, for example, at verse 1, we have, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. And then in verse 21, we read created again, “So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” And then the term *byra*, the word

to create occurs a third time and only the three in verse 27. “So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

So we have then creation referred to in the three places, and those specific places in which changes are described by Moses. Verse 1, we move from nothing to inorganic matter. God created the heavens and the earth. And then in verse 21, “so God created great sea creatures and every living thing.” We move from inorganic life to organic life; the great sea creatures. And then in verse 27 when God created man and woman, we move from the organic life to human life.

So it would appear that Moses has used the term “create” in these three places with the definite sense of moving from one aspect of matter and life to another; nothing to inorganic matter, inorganic to organic life, and organic life to man. So God created the space, mass, time, universe. The emerging picture then, to sum it up, is that we have moved from nothing to the creation of the heavens, the earth, to male and female and to animals and matter or all the kinds of matter that make up our world.

The emerging picture is that we have moved from the pre-existent God of all -- to all of the history that arises out of what he creates in the creative -- the creation account. The person who is unique in the first chapter is the person of God. I didn't count twice, but I think about thirty-five times in this account, which ends in chapter 2 in verse 3, I believe, the term “God” is used about thirty five times. He is the sovereign Creator.

And the thing that one gains from just meditating upon that and thinking about what Moses says about it is that there is a tremendous difference between God and man. We are not the unique God or the unique person that he is. We are craftsmen, but he is the Creator. And the idea, if you reflect upon it for a little while, is a staggering idea giving one of the reasons that mark the eternal, infinite God from you and me. Amazing, we don't create. We craft what he has created perhaps. And some do it better than others, but that is all we are.

There is another thing that appears and that is that the God that Moses describes is an imminent God. For example in verse 2 we read concerning the spirit “and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” That is a word that is used elsewhere in the Old Testament of birds hovering over their nests and so the idea that emerges is of a God who cares; a God who cares for his creation. So he is the eternal, infinite God, but he is an imminent Creator and a personal being.

Now, what then has become of our world as a result of what God has done? If you think about it for a moment you'll realize that what has taken place in Genesis chapter 1 in verse 1 is that he has created that which is now the center of the universe. This world of which we are a part is the center of the universe. Think of all the worlds that are about us in this expanding universe that scientists speak about so often. But the center of it all is this planet on which we walk. How significant that is. So upon this small planet of the earth will be fought the decisive battle between God and Satan. We know, of course, from Genesis chapter 3 that there has been a previous creation. Job confirms it. That the angels were created and the head of the angels, Satan, were created before man was created. And the struggle, because of the fall of the angelic beings, has already begun. But now earth becomes the scene of the struggle between God and the devil. So the decisive battles that will determine the way in which life will move and the way in which life will go through the ages, is to be fought right here upon this earth that has been created. Although a mere atom in comparison with the colossal stars of universal space, it is, though not as regards size and matter, but as regards the history of salvation, the center of the universe.

Erich Sauer says that in one of his books, “On it the highest presents himself in solemn covenants and divine appearances on it, this little world in which we are a part, on it the Son of God becomes man, on it stands and has now stood the cross of the Redeemer of the world and on it, though indeed on the new earth yet still on the earth

will be at last the throne of God and of the Lamb.” What a magnificent picture we would arrive looking at Genesis from the standpoint of the divine story that is to unfold.

Now, we need to turn to verse 26 through 28 and verse 7 of chapter 2. Now, you're familiar with 26 through 28, and we'll just look at Genesis 2 in verse 7; the creation of man.

“And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

You get the impression when you turn to man that what has been given up to this point, as [indistinct] has often said, is like an overture. That is, everything in Genesis chapter 1 seems to be moving toward the creation of man. We all have great problems with men. A tendency of people is to ask the question “who am I, man.” Some of the theologians incidentally have pointed out that the question “what is man” is at the center of theological and philosophical concern. And what is man has become almost more important than any other theological question.

You know, I love the comic strips and one I miss is one that was somehow or another omitted from the *Dallas Morning News* comics sometime back. It was called Heartland. And there was a little boy called Dave Heart, who was the one around which the story moved. And back in November of '85, he is sitting in front of his family counselor and the counselor was asking him questions. “Dave, (he’s just a little boy.) -- Dave, as you continue through this journey we call life, on a collision course with adolescence (first panel), I think it's important that you begin to find yourself, to discover yourself (second panel.) (Third panel) In essence, (and the counselor is getting more and more emotional), he’s saying in essence, to find out who you are. (And the last panel is) Dave is looking and is sitting in his chair looking off kind of absentmindedly saying, “Well heck, I thought I was Dave Heart. I didn't realize that I was lost.”

The Bible tells us so much about what man really is, and we find here again everything leads up to man. It has been said man is his own most vexing problem perhaps, but maybe it's deeper than that. I know this about man. He's different from everything up to this point. The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being; a talking living being, such as you and I are and occasionally a thinking being, too. We are different. We are not like the squirrels or like the lions or like the dogs. They have life, but they don't think as we do. Everything that moves them is instinct. I'm getting a fresh lesson in that because we're keeping Scogan Meil's dog for about five days, and it's very interesting to watch a dog again. Years ago I said “no more dogs,” and I've kept my promise for many years. And Martha has said the same thing. We don't have any intent on keeping the dog, but we've grown to like the dog and love the dog in five days. [laughter] But the poor dog does not have any sense of the worship of God at all. Isn't that pitiful? He's not interested in the Bible. Any spiritual conversation we have, he's not interested in that. The only thing he's interested in is getting out the door because the squirrels are out there, and he wants to chase the squirrels. Instinct.

Now, my instinct is to do something else with squirrels, but their instinct is to chase the squirrels. What a difference man is.

So the creation of man, the fact of it described in verses 26 through 28, “male and female He created them.” The process of it described briefly here, the formation of his material being, the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, the skilled craftsman in a covenant work suggested by the Hebrew (I think) makes man, bearing within him the possibility of death because we know he does die, so created with the possibility of death. The formation of his spiritual being suggested by “and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. *Na'phach*, and he breathed into his nostrils. That word is a word that is warmly personal. You can think of God doing this “breathing into his nostrils the breath of life.” *N'shamah*, the spirit of life breathed by God himself into the

man, warmly personal, face-to-face intimacy, like a kiss, giving us life. That's a picture of how much God appreciates his creation and how much more he appreciates his redeemed creation; that is, believers who have been brought to him by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Man is amazing.

We've heard a lot of confusing things in answer to the question 'what is man'. Some have said man is a beast, a skunk, a snake in the grass, a mule, a jackass, a monkey, an ape, a wolf, a fox, a bear, a dog, a worm. Get all of those people out of your mind that you are thinking about when some of these terms are mentioned to you. A poor fish, a buzzard, a shark, a clam, a slippery eel. Some of them fit some men pretty well, don't they? Some of our acquaintances even perhaps. In fact, there are a few of them in there that are very personal. They touch me too. One thing is certain, the fellow who wrote that paragraph said “man is fearfully and wonderfully made” and the resulting person is described in the last part of the verse, “and man became a living being.” He's among the animals, but he's over the animals. He's given authority over them. We read in verse 28 of chapter 1,

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Man is to be the king of the earth. In his unfallen state of being possessed of great dignity and yet even in his unfallen state, there is a hint because he's made of dust, that he shouldn't be anything other than a humble king. That's our origin.

I'll make a couple of concluding observations with reference to it. Adam, therefore is God's unique work, making him king of the creation, holy. I differ a bit with those who hold that Adam was created innocent. I think he was created holy. And there are problems with both of those views, but I prefer to believe that he was created holy. Not the result of the random toss of molecular dice or a wave in the primeval sea, but the divine counsel; “let us make man,” “let us make man,” the divine counsel. As Ephesians

once said, “He works all things according to the counsel of his own will”. And so the creation is a purposeful act of the purposeful God the Father, or God.

Now the creation of the woman. Since we've talked about that just recently, I won't say too much about it. It's a natural question to turn to the creation of the woman because we read in verse 27, chapter 1.

“So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female created He them”

So after the creation of man it's natural for Moses to take up the creation of the woman. And what I tried to say when we were talking about feminism was that this section here is very important for questions that do face us today in the Christian church. That is the place of evangelical feminism with evangelical churches and with regard to the Bible that we call our guide in life. This is the source of a great deal of the New Testament doctrine, these verses. If you want to find out what marriage is like, this is one the most important of the sections of the Bible, the place to begin. And so here marriage, and then secondly the relation of the sexes in and outside marriage is set forth richly in the symbolic treatment that is given the creation of the woman. I don't mean by that that this is a symbol, but it has symbolic reference or it has biblical reference and biblical application for marriage and the relation of the sexes in the church, in the home, and personally.

The occasion is described in verses 18 through 20. Adam was given the task of naming the animals. And he named all of the animals and he looked at all of God's created world, and he said in effect 'there is nothing for me.' He's the monarch, but he has no mate among the animals. And so what God does is to give him a spiritual help mate, a mental helper (we need that, don't we), and a physical helper; so a spiritual, mental, physical helpmate. Lovely expression of the dignity of woman as created by God is that she is a helpmate. I love the way in which God does this, too, because we read;

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.”

So the very act itself suggests the unity of the race because Eve derives her being from Adam, not Adam from Eve, and she is created for him. So the relationship is a relationship that suggests a unity of the race, the dignity of Eve, fashioned by -- Now there are some doctors in the audience, and I have asked one of them a long time ago to describe the way in which God did this in the way in which one might describe surgery now because it does appear it is something like surgery that God does because he causes a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and then he takes out Adam's rib and sews it up so to speak, and out of the rib, Eve is created. And this person said to me, “Well, I guess you could say that Eve was fashioned by, quote, “the Divine diplomat of the Adamic board of surgery.” That was the way in which he described it because that's the kind of a title for surgeons to have the American diplomat, be a diplomat of the American Board of Surgery. At any rate, God is the divine craftsman and in what happens, there is a vivid portrayal for marriage as well because we read, “Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He (God) brought her to the man.”

Now, I want you to know, it was a long time after I had married a lot of young couples, that I made the connection between this last clause, “and he brought her to the man.” It's amazing the things you can do and not really fully appreciate after you've done them a long time. But after this came home to me that what God is doing, he's acting -- well, we picture it in the marriage ceremony when the father comes down the aisle with his bride -- with his daughter on his arm to give to the groom. What a beautiful picture of God bringing Eve to Adam. And so ever since that time when it finally dawned upon me, blind and hardened as my mind sometimes is, marriage has meant a lot more to me as I see a bride coming down the aisle, on the arm of her father, and I'm thinking and He brought her to the man. Marriage is surely something that God in his manifold wisdom has given to us. It's something to be appreciated; it's something to constantly thank him

for; it's something that our society has lost a great deal of touch with. And I'm afraid that the ideas found in the word of God would mean an awful lot to our society if they only knew them. At any rate, Eve was fashioned, brought by God himself to Adam.

If you will think about it for just a moment, Eve's life (That's the diplomat of The Believer's Chapel board of tape ministry wanted to be sure I wasn't making a noise and I was so interested in what I was doing that I was going to do it if I had already done it a little bit.) At any rate, Eve and Adam united in marriage as a result of the shedding of blood and also the wounding of the body. What a beautiful picture. That's an illustration of the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. We the bride of Christ, we have entered into the relationship of union with our Lord by virtue of the wounds of Calvary and the blood that was shed there and in the relationship that the church has to him. We have Adam and Eve in marriage state. We are his.

Well, Eve must have been a beautiful girl, but I guess any girl among the dogs and the animals and whatever would have looked good. But I'm sure she was a beautiful girl. And when Adam saw her, when God brought her to him, Adam said (I wish you could catch the force of the Hebrew text here because it is really exciting) and he says something like this “This at last, hath I am. This at last! Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.” So you catch the idea that he looked all over the animal creation and he couldn't find anything that really he felt was suitable for him, the helper, comparable to him, but now and this is finally, the Lord has finally done it, as if He should have done it long time ago, but now He's finally done it and Eve is there.

I read a cute little story today. There was a boy who came to a Bible class for the first time and was delighted in the midst of the Bible class, to open up the book that they were going to study, a little study book, to see the first color picture. And he saw it and he said “Hey, guys, this is going to be good. Here's Tarzan and Jane.” [laughter] Well, it's even better than that, isn't it?

So let me sum it up then because our time is up. The chapter incidentally, ends when they were both naked, the man and his wife and were not ashamed. No corruption of the organs use yet and so the nakedness does not bring shame, but things change when the fall takes place.

Now you think as you read Genesis chapter 2 this is just a story, but isn't it striking that the Lord, the apostles, highlight this incident in the letters that they right to instruct the churches and individuals to whom they wrote. In other words, they find in this simple story, some of the significant truths that are to guide and govern our lives down through the centuries. Ever since the creation, the sexes are complimentary; fellow heirs of the grace of life. The union is a monogamous union. Eve is to be his wife, not one of his wives, but his wife. Marriage before intercourse pictured here. A union that is heterosexual. He did not create Adam and Freddy; Adam and Eve as we say. The union is a union of perfect oneness. It's a union sealed by God because over in the New Testament in Mark chapter 10 in verse 8 and verse 9, there is a text that bears on it, and it is supposed to be something that God himself has said. Mark chapter 10, verse 8 and 9;

“and the two shall become one flesh,’ so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

So the union of perfect oneness, a union that God sealed, and the cultural mandate in Genesis 1, verse 28, when God said be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it. The cultural mandate will now advance, and Adam and Eve will have children and begin to fill the earth. Someone has said, I don't know whether it is true or not, but someone has said that marriage is the only bliss that has survived the fall. And surely that was some happily married man or woman that said that. But it was God's intent that we all, as individuals who are married, enjoy the relationship as God intended that we should. Well, this is the way God's plan of the ages has its beginning in creation. And in our next study we'll follow along as we treat the divine purpose in history and prophecy. Let's bow together in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so thankful to Thee for the word of God. And we know, Lord, as we read and ponder it that this word is inspired of Thee. It has ministered to us as only an inspired word could. It has ministered to us the infinite joy of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus as the Savior of sinners. And in that company, we surely belong. We thank Thee for the Holy Spirit who has brought us to the knowledge of Him. Help us, Lord, to be what Thou didst intend for us to be by Creation and now through redemption. Guide and direct us in our studies together.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.