

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

The Sixth And Seventh Days

By

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Genesis 1:24 - 2:3; 2 Peter 3:9-14

I read in *Christianity Today* that Robert Shuller designed the Crystal Cathedral to have those elements of beauty that strike a chord in human souls. He envisioned a garden-like setting with beautiful trees and flowers, birds chirping, fountains flowing. He shared with *Christianity Today* his belief that man longs for that Edenic garden environment, and that worship is inspired by such surroundings. I thought at the time and still do that he has a good insight in to man 's intuitive apprehension of that perfect environment that once existed, and his longing to return to the Garden of Eden. This paradise-like environment does not exist today as it once did and as it will exist again in God's time.

Judy loves green and growing things. She can't seem to get enough plants and flowers. She spends a lot of time tending her plants. We even have a few artificial ones in our home. Many of you have that same appreciation for horticultural beauty, both inside and outside your home or anywhere you find it for that matter. We will spend money to go to Callaway Gardens and other garden spots because we have within us a wistful and earnest longing for that Edenic beauty and perfection that once belonged to man. Many of you love to get away into the mountains or woods or go to some holiday hideaway so that you can get back to nature and enjoy God's creation. How many times have I heard someone say that they can worship God as they get away to some scenic natural setting? Even our sanctuary here at First Presbyterian has wood in abundance and we place flowers and green things about to remind us of the God who created these beautiful things.

My point in saying all this is to state this simple fact: This present world is not the world that God originally created. This world is a fallen world. It is a world which has a curse in it, in which death has entered, in which God's testimony about it all being "Very Good" in Genesis 1:31 is no longer the case. We will not attempt to cover the fall of man into sin today. But let us today consider God's own account of those two final creation days, day 6 and day 7.

I. The Sixth Day

By the end of the fifth day God had made out of nothing the whole cosmos and had caused the earth to bring forth vegetation, trees, all plant life; also all fish and creatures that live in the water; also all birds and flying creatures; then came the sixth day, the final day of creation. In that sixth day God made beasts of every kind so that the whole earth in both sea and on the land and in the air was filled with every imaginable creature that God had thought to make. And He saw that what he had made was good. It was a beautiful and splendid world. But now there is a pause and God has a consultation with Himself. Verse 26 tells us, 26Then 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." Gen. 1:26.

Please notice that the doctrine of the Trinity is implied in this verse. God is One Lord, yet He can refer to Himself as plural using the word "us" and "our" about Himself. Already in chapter one we have had God referred to as the Spirit of God and we have God executing creation by His Word. While we should not use this passage alone as an argument for the Trinity it certainly harmonizes with later scriptures, which reveal to us the persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Godhead

Clearly, the Lord is letting us know that the creation of man is something special, the crowning work of all His creation on this earth. Man is the last in the order of creation but first in importance. This is made absolutely certain by what is said in verse that follows.

27God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Gen. 1:27 (NASB)

What does it mean to be created in the image of God, created according to the likeness of God? For one thing, there can be no higher or nobler creature than man. God is the Supreme Being and man is now created in the image of the Creator. This means that man has attributes of personality as God does. Man can think. Man can know.

Man can will. Man also has the capacity to commune and communicate. But this image of God is not now as it was in the day God created Adam and Eve. That original image had righteousness and was inclined to holiness. Adam saw all things with a keen and clear intelligence. He was capable of making perfect judgments; all of his senses were sound and well regulated.

Because Adam was created with a God-like righteousness he was capable of being confirmed in that perfect righteousness. After a reasonable probationary period he would have been confirmed in that righteousness forever. As he came from the hand of God he had a perfect righteousness, yet his righteousness and image was not immutable as we later learn from the test of obedience God set before him. Nonetheless, at creation Adam was perfect in righteousness, was in communion with God and his soul was immortal.

Because man was created in the image of God he was given dominion over the entire creation. As Robert Dabney said, *"This was the appropriate result of Adam's moral likeness to his Creator."*

God is the perfect Being to whom is due all worship and obedience. Because He made all things, and because He is the sovereign Lord of all His works, as our Confession says, *"to him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them"*. (COF 2:2.)

Man, created in the image of God, endued with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness and ²⁸God **blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."** Gen. 1:28 (NASB)

What an exalted creation was man? He alone of all the creatures could appreciate this beautiful world. He was the royal steward of all that God had made. What more could he have wanted or needed? He was the administrator and executor of a vast world with fabulous resources and exquisite beauty.

II. The Seventh Day

As the seventh day dawned God was done. He had finished the work of creation on the sixth day and as he finished it he looked upon it and ³¹God **saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.** Gen. 1:31.

God's creation was not just good but very good. We could say at this point that the creation of God was complete. It was perfect in every detail. Nothing had been overlooked. Nothing could have been added to make it better, and man was the crowning touch. Not until He had made man did God see His creation as "Very Good," perfectly good, excellent, and superb. All was in perfect harmony and symmetry. We can say that at this point the First Law of Thermodynamics was instituted. All things were finished. Nothing could be added or taken away from what God had created. Heat and energy might be interchanged but never destroyed, for by the seventh day God completed His work of creating, ³Then **God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.** Gen. 2: 3.

Let me say at this point that God has not ceased from all work. He has ceased from his creative work but not His work of Providence and the forming of souls. In John 5:17 the Lord Jesus said, **"My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."** John 5:17. But so far as we know, God has not been creating out of nothing as He did in those first six days of creation. That is not to say that He could not if He wanted to. What He did once He certainly could do again, but seeing that He saw all that He had made as "Very Good" there would seem to be no reason to repeat doing it.

But let us turn to what Peter said in his second epistle under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁰**But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.**

¹¹Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and

hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

2 Pet. 3:10-13

When the Lord fulfills His promise to come again this present world will be destroyed with intense heat, the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up but according to his promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells v. 13.

When God finished His work of creation and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden there was righteousness and perfection. Man's sin changed many things about this world. But God has come as a Redeemer and has paid the penalty for sin. In Jesus Christ there is forgiveness and renewal for every redeemed soul. Christ is the image of God, and God has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Those whom God has called to Himself shall be conformed to the image of Christ and be confirmed in true righteousness and holiness. Paul told the Corinthians in his 2nd letter, chapter 3:18 **¹⁸But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**

Before God restores this earth he is gathering out of this world a people who are being transformed into the image of God. When the earth is restored there will be a people that are truly in the image of God, in true righteousness and holiness. This was why Christ came. The image of God in Adam before the fall was a perfect righteousness and true holiness. Sin has terribly marred that image, defaced that image,

A very popular play that has captivated audiences in London and sell-out audiences in New York on Broadway is "The Phantom of the Opera." Judy and I went to see it a few years ago at the Fox Theatre. The play was written by French Novelist Gaston Leroux in 1910. Subsequently, it was made into a movie and it was adapted for a musical stage show by British composer Lloyd Webber. In watching the review of this musical on CBS "Sixty Minutes" I was fascinated with the fact that the mysterious phantom wears a half mask to cover something very grotesque in his appearance. He cannot bear to have the mask removed and be exposed to anyone. Undoubtedly, this hit musical was not only sold out because of the music but because the play tells a story of a gruesomely disfigured genius who haunts the Paris Opera and who falls in love with a beautiful soprano and writes an opera for her, but in the end he is left desolate, abandoned and miserable.

The story line somehow rings a bell. We all wear a mask over our sin, and sin will leave the soul terribly and gruesomely marred. Only Christ can restore that marred soul. Only God can restore the soul to wholeness and righteousness. Only then can man be what he was made to be in the original creation. **²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Gen. 1:27**

And when all of God's elect have been renewed in that image and Christ returns, then shall God bring to pass the Word He spoke by Isaiah the prophet, ¹⁷ **"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.**

¹⁸ **"But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness.**

¹⁹ **"I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. Isa. 65:17-19**

You and I are called to be in the image of God. We are assured in the gospel that we are reconciled to God by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. **¹⁹For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. Rom. 5:19 (NASB)**

Repentance is a ripping off the mask that covers our marred face and faint is turning to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and renewal. Genesis 1 tells us our original state was in the image of God. The gospel tells us how we can be restored to that image and be what God intended us to be. Are you in Christ today? Have you come to Him

for his forgiveness and healing, his mercy and love? Come to him today and begin that life of faith that will assure you a place in that new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

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