

Lesson #1—The Perspective of Creation.

Introduction

- A. If we are going to understand ourselves we must begin with our creation. This is not to deny that our daily existence is important for self-understanding. However, we must have a perspective whereby our day by day experiences may be evaluated.
- B. A study of creation is also helpful in that we are led more and more to understand the greatness of our Creator. It is interesting to see that God often refers to His acts of creation to illustrate His power and majesty. Note Isaiah 40:12-31; 42:1-8; 43:1-28; 44:21-28; 45:5-25. Such a study as this should lead us to recognize the greatness of God, to worship and praise Him, to obey Him and to respond to Him in faith, love and hope.

I. The Biblical Position Summarized. (Sample only)

- A. Man was created by God, not by an evolutionary force, Genesis 1:26, 27; Isaiah 43:1; John 1:1-4.
- B. Man was created in God's image, Genesis 1:26, 27; Ephesians 4:24; Colosians 3:10.
 - 1. The natural image: Personality.
 - a. By personality is meant at least self-consciousness and self-determination.
 - b. By his creation man possesses intellectual ability, natural affection, and freedom to make decisions.
 - 2. The moral image: righteousness, holiness and knowledge.
 - a. By creation man was given the ability to know truth, to love, to express himself in righteousness and holiness, and to make meaningful decisions.
 - b. In his creation man was thereby able to express himself in this way in his relationship to God, to the other members of the race, and to himself.
- C. Man was created in a relationship with God whereby he was given dominion over the earth and exhorted to cause it to develop its potentiality, Genesis 1:28; 2:15.

II. The Biblical Position Explained. (Sample only)

- A. God created us as persons.
 - 1. God treats us as persons.

This sets the pattern and perspective as to how I am to regard myself. I must accept and treat myself as a person. I have the right and privilege to know, to be heard, to feel, to have an opinion, to develop my potentiality, to assume responsibility, to do meaningful tasks and to enjoy life. I may not treat myself as a thing, or as unimportant, or as irresponsible.

Scripture:

Genesis 1:26—

Genesis 15:1; 16:8; I Samuel 3:4—

Psalms 23—

Matthew 7:7-12—

Matthew 28:18-20—

Colossians 1:9-11—

I Timothy 4:16—

2. God holds us responsible as persons.

Our primary responsibility is to honor and glorify God in the light of our creation. We are also held responsible by God to treat ourselves and other persons correctly. These obligations to which God holds us, with their implications for the Scripture and judgement, are to be recognized as an evidence of God's love. He is treating us as persons.

Scripture:

Genesis 2:16, 17—

Genesis 4:9—

Isaiah 43:21-28—

Romans 14:10-13—

3. It is God's will that we be fulfilled as persons.

The Bible is very clear in its teaching that God made us so that only He could bring fulfillment to us through a life of love and devotion to Himself. This is what the Scripture means when it states that we were made "for God" (Isaiah 43:21). The many references in the Bible to the joy of the Lord also emphasize this great truth. Once the believer learns this secret of surrender and fellowship with God—then all other facets of life become enjoyable. It is a tragic mistake to give up hope of fulfillment, or to covet, or to seek fulfillment first in possessions, abilities, relationships of life or in ourselves.

Scripture:

Psalms 1—

Psalms 119:24, 44, 77, 174—

Isaiah 43:1-21—

John 15:11—

Galatians 5:22—

B. God created us as spiritual persons.

As the creation of God our basic characteristic is found in the word "spiritual". This is how God made us—so that we could know Him, understand "spiritual" truths, perform "spiritual" functions such as worship, love and obedience, and interpret life from the perspective of God and His Word. We are sacred people. We may not treat ourselves as an animal or as though our basic fulfillment could be found in the sensual or physical.

Scripture:

Genesis 3:8-10—

Genesis 9:6—

Genesis 15:1-21—

I Corinthians 2:15—

I Corinthians 3:1—

C. God created us as rational persons.

By the term "rational" man is described as having the created ability to know truth, draw conclusions, develop principles, integrate areas of life and thought under a single perspective, and interpret life correctly through the perspective of divine revelation. God has made us so we can know Him,

ourselves, others, life and the universe He has created. God holds us responsible as rational persons for what we should know and for what we should do.

Scripture:

Genesis 2:16, 17—

Genesis 3:8-19—

Isaiah 55:1-13—

II Corinthians 4:1-6—

II Corinthians 5:10—

Colossians 2:3—

II Timothy 3:14-17—

C. God created us emotional persons.

We have by creation the ability to sense and express such feelings as love, hate, fear, courage, joy, grief, etc. In themselves such feelings are good and may all be used to glorify God. The stoical attitude that refuses to accept or express any emotion is wrong. God made us to feel deeply about things both good and bad.

Scripture:

Genesis 2:18-25—

Proverbs 8:13—

Matthew 22:24-40—

Hebrews 5:1-7—

Jude 21-23—

E. God created us volitional persons.

One of the greatest abilities given to man is that of choice. Adam could use his will to choose for or against God. The believer today has an analogous ability. It is vitally important for the Christian to recognize this ability and to obey God in decisions of faith, love and hope. The ability to choose must not be confused with the feelings of inability. One does not need an emotional assurance to make a correct decision of faith.

Scripture:

Joshua 24:15—

Proverbs 1:29—

Romans 6:11-13—

Ephesians 4:22-32—

Philippians 1:22—

F. God created us moral persons.

The Scriptures teach us that God wrote His laws on our hearts when He created us (Romans 2:14, 15). We were created moral in that we were given a consciousness of right and wrong and with that an ability to refuse the wrong and choose the good. The believer today is restored to that facet of the image of God.

Scripture:

Genesis 2:16, 17—

Judges 20—

Romans 2:14, 15—

II Corinthians 4:2—

I Timothy 1:5—

I Peter 3:16—

G. God created us to be His representatives.

In the act of creation we were given dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:28) and were told to dress and keep it (Gen. 2:15). All mankind share in this God-given ability and responsibility. Essentially this means that God has given us the ability to take the world and to glorify Him by causing it to develop its potentiality. This is an all-inclusive task in which man has been given the office of prophet, priest and king. As God's prophet we speak forth His truth, as king we rule over His world, and as priest we cause the creation to glorify Him.

Scripture:

Genesis 1:28—

Genesis 2:15—

Exodus 19:5, 6—

I Peter 2:5, 9—

H. God created us to glorify Himself.

This is the ultimate purpose of our creation. God is worthy of all the adoration, glory and honor that ever could be given to Him. It is our privilege to live, work and serve so that glory will come to Him. This is brought about when we choose to live as outlined above. Nothing will glorify God more than the believer who lives a consistent Christian life, in the will of God, with the Fruit of the Spirit manifested in his life. When this is true then all facets of life can be meaningful and glorifying to God.

Scripture:

Isaiah 43:7, 21—

John 11:4—

John 15:8—

Acts 11:18—

Galatians 1:24—

I Peter 4:11, 14—

Conclusion: Suggestions for memorization and application.

A. Memorize Isaiah 43:1, 7, 21.

B. Apply this lesson by daily making the following affirmations:

1. God chose to create me. My existence is an evidence of His love for me.
2. God created me for a purpose. I choose to live for His glory.
3. God created me to be fulfilled spiritually. I choose to surrender my life to Him and to respond to Him in faith, love and hope.

YOU - A PERSON - PROFOUND POSSIBILITIES - TO GOD
TO OTHERS
TO WORK

SPIRITUAL
RATIONAL
EMOTIONAL
VOLITIONAL
MORAL

} = HIS REPRESENTATIVES = HIS GLORY

