

7.03.2024

Day Six

Genesis

Chapter 1 (vs. 28-31)

Well, we've been looking at the Book of Genesis. So, if you'll turn in your Bibles to Genesis 1. As we begin to see the beginning of things created, we realize that God is not necessarily giving us a science class. Unfortunately, I think a lot of people try to make it a scientific endeavor as we explore the Book of Genesis, but if you were to think about all of the things that God could have talked about, if in fact He was going to bring science in, whether it be physics or gravitational pull or biology, or all the things that are part of creation and the very details of it; He certainly had this opportunity, and yet it is very succinct and very short and to the point, as He begins to talk about certain things in creating. When He deals with the universe, I mean, literally the universe, and the stars He made also. So, the way that He approaches this really is not as much emphasizing the science of it as it is His plan and His purpose in the creation of all these things and how we, or man is involved. There is a kind of progression that goes on, and by the time we come to day six, we realize where the focus is. So, the sheet that I gave you, in a way, we've been progressing and defining more clearly. It's, once again, like you take the telescope out and you're looking out there and everything's kind of fuzzy, but you start focusing it. Well, you go through the different days, and things become clear as the passage goes on. So, the clarity of it then comes into focus as we come to day six, and we realize why He made everything. It's one of the great points of the Book of Genesis, that God is doing the work. It is also describing who God is. This is a wonderful book that describes who God is, how He thinks, what is important to Him. If you look with me as we go through the different days, you're going to see that what I've added on is the attribute, if we can put it this way, or the nature of the characteristic of God that is really being emphasized in each of these days.

Day 1, obviously, God alone. "In the beginning God." We don't have any other. As we give you a passage here, Isaiah 44:24, as God says, "I created all these things by Myself, alone." So, that just takes all kinds of theories off the table. That really had nothing to do with any kind of metamorphosis or anything that happened. God spoke and it was done, as the psalmist says. So, you see God unilaterally, meaning by Himself, causing things to happen. These things that are happening are not a result of God reacting or responding according to His surroundings.

God is acting according to who He is. So, everything that He's doing is clearly defining just Him, and we realize that He's not influenced by other sources. So, as we come to this day 1 is "one."

We give you a passage in Colossians 1:16-20 that really relates that God is creating all these things for His good pleasure. Now the question is, what is God's good pleasure? What is amazing to us is God's good pleasure is for His lovingkindness to be from everlasting to everlasting; to demonstrate His lovingkindness. So, one of the things that we're going to see as we go through the Book of Genesis is not only the grace of God, but as man goes and fails and falls, we realize that God is then reconciling him. So, we have virtually two stages, and the first is the grace of God given; man, undeserved of these things, actually brought up from the dust. What does dust deserve? Yet God gives him and makes him the crowning joy of creation. So, we realized that this is God's good pleasure and the reason why that's so important is because we have a tendency to think in terms of, "I've got to court His good pleasure." God is good anyway. That's who He is, and the grace of God while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We go, "Well, He died for me because He saw that I was worthy." No, you weren't worthy. It's because of who He is. The same thing is true that when we approach Him, we come boldly before the throne of grace. You don't come boldly before the throne of, "You did this," or "I did that." So, as we come into this day one, creating all for His good pleasure, you begin to realize that He is giving us a picture of how His desire is to bring purpose and fulfillment. Now, He doesn't go into a lot of explanation in this. He just conveys that the Earth was formless and void and the point being is, empty and meaningless. God is going to, out of this, call light out of darkness. So, you have this obscurity, you have depression. You have this blanket of darkness over the world, and God calls light out of it. Well, He's giving us a picture. All of that is saying day 1, It's His idea.

Now, if you look at day 2, it really seems to be focusing on and "two" has the connotation of a division or separating. So, it shouldn't surprise us that in the second day separating is one of the key points that He conveys, as well as altering and changing, duplicating, transforming the image. It is giving us this interesting picture of, think of it this way, if you didn't know God, day 2 would tell you He is One who distinguishes; He separates. If you were to talk to somebody that you didn't know, and you would ask them, "Well, what's really important to you?" And the person said something like, "Well, everything's important." Well, you just ran into somebody that makes no distinctions. He has no perception of something being more valuable than something else. So, God has given us that interesting picture of He is a God that distinguishes.

Then, day 3 is an interesting picture of anticipation. The "three" gives us that sense of anticipation which ultimately is that sense of hope, and you have this wonderful picture of life coming up from the ground. So, you have God raises up hope; He draws up from the water; He delivers from the water. He creates land out of the water. Everything's being drawn out, being

drawn out, being drawn out, and it's a wonderful picture of God saving rescuing all the way from Genesis to Exodus, God draws out of the water. You also see the springing up from the ground and life coming up from the ground. Of course, promised in Isaiah chapter 26, and promised in Daniel 12, that God is going to raise the dead up from the ground. All of these things are springing forth in prosperity, and God is wanting to give this. God has given us a picture that God is not only a God that alone brings purpose and fulfillment; God is not only the One who distinguishes and separates things, but God is a God who raises up hope out of nothing. You have this wonderful picture of anticipation. Paul talks about hope specifically in the Book of Romans and emphasizes this wonderful thing that we have a confident expectation in the future. What a wonderful thing when you think about the future, because if you don't have hope, if you don't have something to look forward to. I know that in VBS I think Julie brought by these little seeds to put in the plant, and I remember doing that when I was a kid. Was it a little bean or something like that? Anyway, I remember doing that and I was thinking it should happen any moment, and I put it in the dirt, and I was just kind of waiting. You have to wait, but about 3 days later, it was pretty interesting, growth started coming up and what an amazing thing. You could just see kids getting hopeful in anticipating something like that. God is a God of hope. He's God of anticipation. This is telling us the nature and the character of God. What has God longed for you to do? He longs for you to hope. He longs for you to look forward to the next day. He doesn't want you to dread it. So, it's giving us once again the nature of God.

Day 4, it's very clear, of course, "four" is that wonderful symbolism throughout Scripture, whether it's in Revelation 7:1, where it talks about the four corners of the Earth, it really is making reference to the extremities; it's an interesting picture of God sovereignly appointing and over all. You read the Scripture, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." But all the way through you realize that in this day 4, God is not only distinguishing night and day, but He's appointing signs for seasons; He's assigning light and darkness. He's enlightening the Earth. He's sovereign over all, and that's an interesting picture as He appoints, and He assigns, and He does these things. So, it's an interesting picture of God's sovereignly appointing, and it's comforting to know that over the days and the months and the things that happen, or over the times of man, as the psalmist says, "My life is in His hands. My times are in His hands." There's the realization of God's sovereignty over all. That's day 4.

Day 5 clearly sends a signal that God abundantly blesses. So, to have a God that really wants to give a lot is such a wonderful thing, and it's probably no wonder that He says, "I love a cheerful giver." Because that's the way He is. By the time you come to day 5, you see all this increase of fish and the birds of the air, and its abundance is really the key phrase that you're going through in that particular day. When you think of the fish, in Zephaniah 1:10, the Fish Gate in Jerusalem was a place of abundance, and it's where they did their business. Why? Because that was really the great abundance that was given in this. So, as you go into this, He describes fish

swimming, things flying. Once again, He doesn't get really specific. I told Connie, I said, "The simplicity of this, it takes you back. Slithering things slither, winged things flittering are kind of the descriptions that He gives, and you go, "Ok. So, what's the scientific name?" He goes, "They flutter." But it is in the simplicity you know exactly what He's talking about. So, is He trying to get bogged down in the scientific jargon? No, but what is He doing? Well, He's giving us a picture of the things that He's created, and He's giving us a picture of His nature in all of these things. Clearly in day 5, it's a picture of God abundantly giving riches that call upon Him.

One of the passages that I give you at the very end here, Ephesians 3:20,

"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think..."

That really is that picture of "five." It's the reason why when you go in Scripture, you have the five books of the Law, the Pentateuch, which gives us abundance of God's grace through His law, more specifically, God directing. The 5 loaves that feed 5000, the 50 cubits wide of the ark; the Tabernacle was 50 cubits wide. Why "wide?" Because it really is demonstrating the great width of the generosity of God. On Pentecost, when the Spirit of God came and you had the first fruits, it was a picture of abundance, "*pente*," meaning 50. So, you have all these pictures of abundance. It shouldn't surprise us that at the resurrection there were 500 witnesses. So, God has given us that wonderful picture of abundance in that.

This is day 6, and as we come to day 6, there's no mistake that we're dealing with something very unique and He's going to be emphasizing that within the passage. The uniqueness obviously is going to be man. By the time you come into Revelation, the number of man is 666. So, the whole point of this is that something magnificent is happening, something very unique to all of creation, and what is it? You begin to realize that all these things God created for man. He's going to emphasize this.

If you pick up with me in verse 24, we touched upon some of this. So, we're going to run through it. Then, as we come, we'll just slow down and emphasize specific points.

(Genesis 1:24) "Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so."

It's a great picture as, once again, the earth giving up these beans. So, you're having life, not unlike the fruit trees and the grass, but what makes it unique is this life, actually, the word that is used within the text is this life is breathing life. So, that's what makes it unique in the sense that breathing life is coming up from the dirt.

So, the way that it's worded is, "bring forth living creatures," and "*hay*" is the word that really emphasizes the kind of breath that comes into these beings.

“...after their kind...” The text is going to define, as it has been doing, that God has made distinctions, and He's made boundaries, and one isn't going into the next group. This is important. It's an important lead up to man because when He creates man, you realize that man is unique, and you go well, “Where did he come from? The cows? Did he come from the gators? Did he come from a primordial blob? Where did he come from?” And he goes, “I made him, just like I made the other animals.” So, within their kind. So, the passage is very clear without being too detailed, but there's no mistake what He did.

(Genesis 1:25) “God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

(Genesis 1:26) Then God said...”

Here again, it's like He's setting the stage. He's bringing life out of the earth, but now He's setting a stage for the crown jewel. So, it kind of interrupts, whereas a lot of the other creation, it's like He's going from one to the next, but here it just kind of stops and it's still the same day.

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image...”

So, the emphasis now comes into a different realm, and we know that we're dealing with the higher being because this being is in the image according to the fashion of or looks like by virtue of figurative language and or literal, but it's just simply saying, “He's going to be like Me.” We talked about this last week, but we will use the phrase, “That boy is in the spitting image of his dad.” Now, we're not saying he looks exactly like him or does exactly the same thing, but what we're saying is he has the same nature.

When you look at Hebrews 1, one of the things that is written in Chapter 1 in particular, as it's talking about the Messiah, is it says, “He is the exact representation of His nature.” So, were we meant to have His same nature? Yes, and this is very important, especially by the time we come in the garden and some crazy serpent starts talking to the woman, because as the serpent starts talking to the woman, his fundamental point is that God is trying to cheat you from being like him, but this particular passage, if you read it with me, is very clear that God said,

“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.”

How can you say He's trying to cheat you? He wants you to be like Him. That's what He wants. So, the passage has given us this interesting picture here of the supremacy of man, and we now begin to see one of the ways in which man is going to be distinctively like God, that is actually drawn out of this particular text. What is that? He's going to be ruling. Up to this point, we haven't had fish being the boss of anybody. We haven't had birds telling everybody what to do, but man is going to be in charge of everything. So, in that respect, God has called him out to be like Him in His likeness; in His image. Now, we're going to go into more detail about that, but

it's very clear that what God is wanting men to do, as the word is literally described, is to have dominion over the Earth; have dominion to rule over. He'll use the phrase, as we go on, to literally subdue or subjugate. So, there's a reason why everybody feels so bossy, it's innate. You talk to a little 2-year-old, and he starts telling you what to do and you go, "Ok, but not yet. You're not ready."

"Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over..."

Obviously, as He begins to describe it as you go on further in Genesis, and He named them both Adam. Of course, this shouldn't surprise us. I mean, where did woman come from? So, it wouldn't be a strange phenomenon for him to talk to both, because knowing that both are in the one.

"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..."

I mean, lest you say, "Well, maybe he's not in charge of this, or maybe he's not in charge of this." He's going to give you a rundown of the things, even though He's talked about those particular animals up to this point, He wants to list them as things man will rule over.

"... 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."

This is one of the reasons why man shouldn't have been listening to a serpent. So, something happened with the order.

(Genesis 1:27) "God created man..."

Now. Obviously, He wants this to be a focal point because He now has repeated it.

"God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Lest at any point we would think that one was more diminished than the other, God is conveying that's not true. Ultimately, we read that in the book of Galatians. "Neither Jew or Gentile, bound or free, male or female."

(Genesis 1:28) "God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth..."

Once again, where's the emphasis?

"... 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."

I guess that would cover everything. I hope that includes mosquitoes, cause I'm not really fond of them. I've told them to leave, but they just don't listen; part of the rebellion.

(Genesis 1:29) "Then God said, "Behold, I have given you..."

Very key point. Now to this point, we've seen things created. We're going, "Why? Just so that they exist in the Earth?" He goes, "No, they were created for a purpose. I've given them to man." These are things that He created for men. Just a good reminder, all of these things we are not subjugated to; they are subject to us, and God has created them for man. Now, we know that man is to be not only a ruler, but an overseer, and we're going to see that point as we go on. The point is that it was made for man, and there's no mistake about that within the passage.

"Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you."

So, at this particular juncture, what is man eating? Fruit off the tree. The trees that have seeds and bear fruit. That's their food, which is telling us that they weren't carnivorous beings; that they weren't killing animals at this particular juncture, that it was not God's intent for the animals to be meat originally. I'm not telling you that you should be vegetarian now, I'm just telling you originally that was not the intent of the passage.

(Genesis 1:30) "and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life..."

So, this is actually a separate point. The first point is that "For man, I've given you the fruit of the tree to eat." Now, he turns to the beast, and He says,

"... I have given every green plant..."

Basically, grass and leaves for the beasts.

"I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so.

(Genesis 1:31) God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."

The sixth day, no doubt, is emphasizing God's crowning joy, and that is man. It's as if He turned to man, and He goes, "See, I did this all for you, and this is for you to enjoy." Now, it's not only just to enjoy, but what is the keyword that we see repeated? "Rule" and "subdue." So, the ruling and having dominion over is really what we're going to focus on specifically as we think about in Scripture. I've often thought about how God is even preparing Adam to rule on the earth and in some regard, when you think about the animals, they're kind of like practice. The reason why I say that is, if you look in Genesis 2:16,

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; (Genesis 2:17) but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

(Genesis 2:18) Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.””

Now, once again, I've oftentimes mentioned this, but just I'll mention it again, it was God's idea for him not to be alone. It's bizarre that man didn't think about it. The reason why I would say it would be bizarre is because the animals all seemingly had mates. So, how bizarre would it be? You get an interesting picture in these few verses of God giving man a hint to kind of work things out upstairs.

(Genesis 2:19) “Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them...”

Well, what is God doing? Well, what He's doing is He's giving Adam observational skills. Why would you name a bird “something that flutters?” Because that's what he does. So, hey, very good. He flutters. “This one slithers, this one crawls, this one's creepy.” Whatever, but you have names. When you look at many of the names, they are names that describe what those animals do. Well, if you look in the context, how does it start off? It's not good for you to be alone, but God's not going to bring the woman into his life until man has some facsimile of observational skills. In other words, instead of thinking about himself and what he wants, He wants him looking and observing what animals do and how they act. So, he can begin to think that way.

If you are familiar with 1 Peter 3, it says, “Husbands live with your wife in an understanding way.” That means that you should develop some kind of observational skills; otherwise, your wife's going to be upset at you and you're going to say, “What'd I do?” And she's going to say something like, “You know.” And then you're just not going to have a clue, but if you're used to observing, and that's what God is doing within the passage.

(Genesis 2:20) “The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast ...”

Here again, giving names was all part of the process of the preparation of the woman, but Adam was alone. “Do you see that you're alone Adam?” And he goes, “Yeah.” So, God was doing the work through the animals. We have one of the first pictures of man having dominion over the animals in that he names them. In the sense that he names them, he is actually developing those observational skills in some way for a purpose, and we're going to see what that is as we go on.

Obviously, when you come to Chapter 3, man doesn't go by the authority that God has ordained. So, he listens to the serpent, to the woman, and all of that begins to fold under. As you go on, you begin to see that God is still elevating what man should do and that he should reign. This is ultimately going to be the drive throughout.

Then, by the time you come into Revelation 3:21, you begin to realize that God wants us to sit on the throne with Him and reign with Him. So, much of this, and we've been talking about this in the Book of Proverbs, that Proverbs is really a preparation to reign. So, you have this father, that is really giving this sense of wisdom, "Son, you've got to be wise if you're going to be helping people; if you're going to reign." And you realize that the reigning is something that you do to help. It really is, as Christ will say, "You want to be the greatest, you'll be the servant of them all." We call them, whether it's police or whether it's governors or presidents, aren't they called servants? I don't know if they really perceive what they're supposed to be doing, but the point is from day one, God had called them to do that. Now the question is, how does God want man to rule? That becomes defined as you go through Scripture, and that's one of the things I want to talk about in particular.

If you look with me in Genesis 4, you have Cain and Abel, and Cain is gardening, but Abel was a, what? Shepherd. So, what we're going to find in Scripture is what God's going to create a paradigm for ruling. He's going to set a standard; a model, and the model for ruling is going to be the shepherd. So, you're going to have Abel that starts this off, and what's also interesting is that, to the best of our knowledge, Abel was not eating sheep. Now, he was probably making clothes and covering, and it was God who sacrificed the first lamb to cover. We realize that when he brings the offering before God, if an animal is slaughtered, it is for the offering of God. Of course, it ultimately is that picture of the lamb that's going to be slain. It will not be until Noah that animals are ingested, and it actually says in Genesis 9:3,

"Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant."

So, things begin to change obviously after that particular point. As we go through the Old Testament, we begin to see different kinds of ruling come to the surface. The first of course, obviously, are the Patriarchs, and you begin to see Abraham as a patriarch ruling over Jacob as a patriarch, ruling as a father ruling over his children. Nevertheless, with each of these, they follow the same paradigm as with Abraham. Abraham is a shepherd, Jacob is a shepherd, and by the time you come to God training somebody to free His people, how does He train him? 40 years as a shepherd. Even when He puts a king on the throne, a man after his own heart; he's got to be a shepherd if he's a man after his God's own heart, because God is really training, showing and modeling what and how He wants men to reign. Man perceives a reigning as I guess a source of privilege or something that he does in order to extrapolate or get more for

himself, and you begin to see all of this kind of getting skewed, whether it's the Patriarch should be shepherding his people, but yet you can see taking advantage of their children. I mean, even the favoritism of Isaac is highly inappropriate as it causes the rift between the sons, and Jacob does the same thing with Joseph. So, though they know what they're supposed to do, they're failing in this, but God has always been raising up man to reign. He's been raising up man to rule, have dominion over, and to make decisions that would benefit people; to help them in some way. The perfect picture as we've been going through and as you will go through Scripture is that picture of shepherding. Now, when you look at the different kinds of governments that begin to come out of this, you realize that man is almost anything but a shepherd.

If you look with me in Daniel 7, I oftentimes thought about these interesting pictures in the Old Testament, and you go, "Why did God do it this way?" And you realize it wasn't as much God doing it this way as it was man choosing this way. It's bizarre, for the most part, if a football team were to choose the mascot, not many would choose a lamb. They're looking for tigers and lions and bears. So, Daniel 7, if you look, the description of the nations are four beasts. One's like a lion. One's like a bear one. One's like a leopard. Then by the time you come to the Roman government, you've got this large beast that has these teeth and they're made of iron, and you go, "Wow, that was one invented by man." And the same thing is true when you see these angelic beings. You'll see them in Ezekiel. You'll see them in Revelation. They have four faces, one like a lion. Well, it's a picture of the different ways to rule. I mean, some rulers are more like an eagle, and it's one of the ways that actually Babylon was described, but depending on the way that a nation rules, certain animals describe. It is very interesting that none of them list the lamb as one of the ways that man chooses to rule. His perception is that he rules by force. So, you have all kinds of governments really coming out of Scripture. It starts off with the with the patriarchs, but then it goes into the monarchs. Ultimately, it will go into a kind of dictatorship where you see Nebuchadnezzar, but you see the different forms of government coming out. You'll see the way man perceives ruling. God wants man to rule, but the way that man perceives ruling is skewed.

If you come to one of the most familiar passages, Joshua 24, as Joshua comes to the people, (Joshua 24:14) "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD."

Now the point is that the fundamental government was going to be a theocracy, under a Republic rule. That is to say, Moses was going to be representative as a prophet, and God was going to reign over the nation, but now, as Joshua goes into the promised land, he goes, "Ok, now you choose." Which almost you have the first picture of democracy in this, don't you?

(Joshua 24:15) “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...”

“Oh, we're going to be in good shape now that we can choose.” That's where problems come, and this is one of the great fallacies of America. The perception is, if you let men choose, he's going to choose right every time, and nothing could be further from the truth.

By the time you come to Judges 21:25,

“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

Well, once again, if you've ever read the Book of Judges, what do you have? You have anarchy. Man might say something like, “Well, there aren't any good kings around. So, let's just do whatever we want to do.” And that's not going to go well because you were meant to rule. This is the interesting point. God has made all these things and man goes to extremes. I heard this one government official, and they were talking to him about something that he chose to do. They said, “Well, why didn't you do this? This seems to be working over here.” He goes, “Well, it works as long as it doesn't.” And his point is that all things seem to work to begin with, but then as time goes, you begin to see the fallacies of it. So, the same thing is true with man, and you begin to read throughout Scripture the experimentation of man in the process of ruling. I'm just saying this so you can understand why our government is so messed up; you can somehow conceive why we are in the mess that we're in. We have kind of a conglomerate of man wanting to rule, but in the process, he chooses a particular form, whether it's a democracy or whether it's theocratic or oligarchy. Solomon was probably more oligarchy in the sense that he was a monarch using a form of kingship to acquire more stuff for him. So, it's an interesting picture of somebody doing that, and you have people that you know take advantage of people for their own good; for their own benefit. These are the things that begin to stir up, and this is the thing that begins to mess up. Well by the time you get to Daniel, you realize almost every nation that comes up is a beast. Then, by the time you look at the end of days, in Revelation 13, not to say this to discourage you, but things aren't going to get better.

(Revelation 13:1) “And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.”

“Coming out of the sea,” by the way, is “out of the nations.”

(Revelation 13:2) “And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion...”

Aren't those the three animals that were mentioned in Daniel 7? What? He's saying that a conglomerate of all the different nations and the way that they rule are coming together, and none of them are good. All of them have an insatiable desire to devour is the fundamental picture of them. The picture then comes that they worship the dragon, which we understand now, who's the source behind these kinds of rulings. Unfortunately, once again, man perceives governmental rule as an answer, whether it be a type or whatever, or maybe the person that they get voted in as the answer to their problems. It's not the answer to their problem, because the problem is man's not ruling well. It's not the ruling that's the problem. God had ordained that to begin with. It's the way that they rule that's the problem, and it doesn't matter if you have democracy or whatever there is. It's not good, or it's only as good as the one that is ruling. So, I mean to have a monarchy could be a wonderful thing if you have a great king. David, as king, it was a great thing for the Nation of Israel. Even the people as they see the Messiah, they cry out, "Have mercy on us, son of David." Because the perception was that he was going to be good. The point all the way through is that God has given the standard of ruling, and this is the fundamental point.

When you look at Psalm 23, David the king is once again mirroring what he knows God is looking for as a paradigm, and it was the very thing, if you remember when David sinned against Bathsheba. In that particular setting, what was used against him? Well, yeah, somebody took advantage of this one that had this one little lamb, and immediately David goes into the mindset of a shepherd, and he goes, "Get him." Because he's protecting and that's what a shepherd should be thinking. The shepherd's not thinking of his own life. Like David said, "I took care of bears and lions for the sheep." And Jesus will say a good shepherd lays down his life for sheep. So, the point of the ruling is to rule in such a way. So, David will start off in Psalm 23, (Psalm 23:1) "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Now, it doesn't say the shepherd shall not want. It said, "Because He's my shepherd, I shall not want." And it really gives a picture of what God intended from the very beginning of what man should be doing as he reigns over the face of the earth; he should be shepherding.

It is that which then carries on into the New Testament, and as Jesus will call fisherman out in John 21, what does He say to a fisherman by the name of Peter? He says, "Feed My sheep." His point is, "You're graduating from fishermen to shepherd, and this is how you do it." When you look at the interesting picture of Acts 20, in which Paul calls together the elders from Ephesus, what does he say? Guard the flock. So, we have the word in the New Testament, "pastor" which literally means "shepherd." It is the very thing that God has called us to do.

John 10 really is the key phrase, and you see in Isaiah, in which God literally says, "I will shepherd My people as a great Shepherd." So, it is God's paradigm, and you couldn't get a better picture than this.

What is interesting is, if you look in Revelation 5, in order to relate this picture, you see one reigning that you wouldn't perceive could ever reign. Here again, I want to take you back to Revelation 4, where it has the four living creatures which is basically the picture of the of the rulers of the Earth.

(Revelation 4:7) "The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle."

Once again, a picture of how rulers' rule. Now, in every case, it's not saying that they're bad. It's saying that that's not the standard that God has elevated for man to rule. What is the standard?

Well, if you look in Revelation 5, who's worthy to take the title deed and to rule over the face of the Earth?

(Revelation 5:6) "And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) ..."

Now this is the point, you have all these powerful beings that could easily take the reign, you would think, and none of them are worthy, but what is worthy? A lamb standing as if slain. Ultimately, if you look in verse 9,

(Revelation 5:9) "And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

The point of the passage is that God has been setting up this paradigm all along. It's the point of the very beginning, because when He turns to the man, He goes, "I want you to be like Me." We go, "What's it like to be like You?" He says, "You'll reign." And we go, "Good. I'll take charge. I'll be in charge of everything." "No, no, no. You'll reign like Me." This is where He's going in all this.

As you go with me, if you would, to Matthew 24. I was thinking about it this past week, and I'd like to make it more applicable to us, but if you come towards the end of Chapter 24 of Matthew, it kind of comes to this culmination of the day in which Christ is coming. I look forward to that day, don't you? Obviously, at that day, hour, nobody knows the time, but what does God want us to do? Well, God has called us to rule. He called us to reign, and as a pastor, I have responsibility; as mothers, you have responsibilities; as fathers, you have responsibility. Sometimes on the job, you have responsibilities. What is your main responsibility? How does He want you to reign? The paradigm has already been established.

John 10, "I'm the Good Shepherd. My sheep hear My voice." He doesn't want you to be like a hireling. A hireling won't give his life, because it's not his sheep. He doesn't care for them. So, it's got to be somebody that's willing to sacrifice for others. Paul, when he writes to the church at Philippi, says, "I'm going to send somebody to you and there's nobody else like Timothy, because Timothy's not thinking about himself, he's thinking about you." And he said, "That's why I'm sending him. Nobody else will care for you like he does." He's given the picture of what it means to really rule.

(Matthew 24:42) "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

(Matthew 24:43) "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

(Matthew 24:44) "For this reason you also must be ready..."

He's given an interesting example of the fact that if you're not alert, something's going to be taken from you. It's one of the reasons why, if you go into 1 Thessalonians 5, where it talks about the Lord bringing His people home, so to speak. It says, "The Lord comes like a thief in the night." "Why is He using the thief in the night?" Because when the Lord comes, He's taking you out of this world, and if you love the things of this world, you'll lose everything. It'll be like you were stolen. A thief had come in and robbed you of all the things that were precious to you, but if you're looking for Him, and He's your hope, there's nothing that could be taken away from you. You have nothing but good given to you. So, it's an interesting picture.

"For this reason you also must be ready..."

So, obviously, He wants to repeat this particular point.

"... for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

(Matthew 24:45) "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household..."

Now, when you go back to Genesis, God is telling man to rule over the face of the Earth. Who is he ultimately responsible to? God has given him a stewardship, He says, "Ok, you've become like Us. I'm going to put you in charge of something. You're the one that's going to be over this. You're going to be overseeing. You're going to be subjugate, but this is how you need to do it." And what is God looking for when He comes? The faithful and sensible slave, whose master put over his house, and He finds him doing the things that he should have been doing.

(Matthew 24:47) "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions."

Now, if you go into Matthew 25, Christ gets more specific, and the way he puts it within the passage,

(Matthew 25:34) “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed...

(Matthew 25:35) “‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in.’”

I want to stop here, and just infer what we've been talking about in Proverbs.

Proverbs 31, she's talking to her son, the king. What does she say? “It's not for you to have strong drink; not for you to go around and pleasure yourself. You need to be thinking about others. You're a king. You need to be taking care of others.” When we sit around, we have this pity party, “Oh, poor me. I'm thinking about me; how am I going to take care of myself?” We were called to reign. We were called to be shepherds, and a shepherd doesn't think about himself, he's taking care of the sheep that's around him and he's willing to give his life for them.

(Matthew 25:36) “‘naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’”

The righteous man said, “When did I do this?” But the point of this is that he didn't perceive that he was doing it because it was a part of his life. You can actually get used to serving to such a degree that you don't even think about doing it anymore. I mean, it's your way of life, and what's bizarre is that you're going to find that you're going to have a lot more joy doing that than all the self-gratifying stuff that you could ever pursue; because the only thing you'll find out of that is emptiness and void, as Genesis 1 will say, that's what you're going to find. Christ is going to turn to His disciples, He says, “You want to have joy, and you want to have it complete? Do what I tell you. Love one another as I have loved you.” An interesting picture.

If you go on, it says,

(Matthew 25:39) “‘When did we see You...’

(Matthew 25:40) The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”

You realize that God's going to hold us accountable for whatever God has placed us in charge of, and you can't sit around and say, “You know, I'm not in charge of anything.” God raised you up for that. So, you better find out what you're in charge of and what you're responsible for, and how you're to do what you're supposed to do, because God's going to bring us to task in accordance with His paradigm. You can say all day long, “I don't want the job.” But that would be going against His first command, “I want you to reign. I want you to rule.”

As Jesus will say in John 15, “And I want you to bear fruit.” So, you can't say, “It's not my job to bear fruit.” “Be fruitful and multiply.” All the way through, He's given the fundamentals of what you're supposed to do. It is wonderful that God wants us to reign with Him, and He wants us to reign in His likeness.

Ultimately, if you look with me in 2 Timothy 2, we've already given you this passage, but just to read it within the text. I think we touched upon this Sunday as well, but you can sense Paul beckoning Timothy, especially in 2 Timothy 2:1,

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

(2 Timothy 2:2) The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Now if you look in verse 3, what is he calling Timothy to do? Suffer hardship. Ok, there's nothing magnificent about just suffering by itself, but there is something magnificent in suffering for others. This once again, is the perfect picture of the good shepherd, that he's willing to lay down his life. When we have things that God calls us to do, and we have to give up time or effort, or perhaps even some of our money to help somebody, I think sometimes we're resentful. That's what He's called us to do, to suffer. Peter will say, you've been called to suffer as Christ did. So, we know where we're heading. If you drop on down with the passage, of course he gives interesting pictures of “Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier.” He gives a picture of a farmer and an athlete and all these things. You begin to see the discipline as well as the person willing to wait and work hard, but if you go on, he says this in verse 10,

“For this reason I endure all things...”

Wow, I mean, I can think of particular days where I told God, “Ok, I have my limits.” But God doesn't seem to take those.

“For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen...”

So, what is God telling us? That we're called to reign, and this is how we're called to reign.

“... so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus ...”

Now, the bizarre thing is,

(2 Timothy 2:11) “It is a trustworthy statement:
For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

(2 Timothy 2:12) If we endure, we will also reign with Him...”

That enduring is that same picture of suffering, and that suffering is that same picture of suffering for Christ's sake.

You see the same thing in Romans 8, if you will look there. In Romans 8, the great picture,

(Romans 8:16) “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

(Romans 8:17) and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

God wants us to reign. He wants us to reign in His image and His likeness. We're being transformed, Scripture tells us, into the image of Christ. What does that look like? Not only does it give us a picture of what we should be doing here, but it gives us a wonderful picture of what heaven is going to be like, because when you think of angelic majesties, and of course you think of the fact that God will call us to reign with Him, you realize that it's not the kind of dictatorship of a lion or a bear.

The wonderful picture, ultimately, there in Isaiah 65, where it gives the picture of the Millennium, and it shows the lion eating the grass instead of eating another animal, which it was originally. Remember, God says, “I gave the grass and the leaves for you to eat.” So, it wasn't till later that animal began to eat animal. Of course, Romans 8 says that creation was subject to futility. It would say that's an interesting picture of futility, things eating each other. You begin to realize that the day is coming when those beasts will be not only subjugated but will have a different role, and heaven is going to be that kind of place in which it's the grace, it's the giving, the kindness, and the love of God that's going to be reigning in heaven. God is honing us out, preparing us for that position so that if you are willing to suffer; gives that interesting picture of actually coming into the greater inheritance in that eternal kingdom. It's something to look forward to. Ruling is not bad. God calls us all to do that. It's how we do it.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we give You thanks for Your word and the encouragement that it gives us; for the direction that it gives us in what You've called us to do. Lord, we pray that we would take these things to heart; that we would literally be transformed into the image of Christ. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.