

Divine Design

“In the beginning, God...”

Throughout the Bible, there is never any attempt made to prove the existence of God. In the old comedy series Family Ties, the somewhat ditzzy daughter, Mallory, has a homework assignment from her philosophy class to prove that she exists. After days of anguish, a moment of illumination brings a smile to her face. Standing in the kitchen with her family listening, she exclaims, “I shop! Therefore, I am!”

Fortunately, God doesn’t face that anguish. Being perfectly content as the great I AM, He never bothers to try to prove it. He always was, is and always will be. It is upon this fundamental truth, the eternal existence of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, that the rest of the revealed Word and nature of God is given.

Here, in this first phrase of the Bible, we also have revealed the triune nature of the LORD. The Hebrew word for God is ‘El’ which is singular. There is ‘Eloah’ as well which is dual and ‘Elohiym’ which represents three or more. Now, the form we find here is ‘Elohiym’. As if to emphasize this compound unity, we read in the famous ‘Shema’, *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One!”* (Deut 6:4) The word for “One” here means a united or compound oneness. What a wonderful and yet mysterious thing – God is triune and yet One.

And man, made in the image of God, is triune as well – thus the scriptural command, *“You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”* (Deut 6:5) Jesus said in Mark 12:29,30 that this was the most important commandment. It addresses the heart

which is the seat of the spirit, the soul which is your character and the strength which speaks of the body. The divine plan is for a complete relationship between God and man – all encompassing; fully integrated; a compound unity.

Additionally, there is a triune correspondence to the Godhead in that we read in Scripture that God the Father is Spirit (John 4:24), Jesus the Son came in the flesh (2 John 7) and the soul made alive by the breath of God (Gen 2:7) points to the “ruach” (Hebrew) or “pneuma” (Greek) i.e. the Holy Spirit (same words – see John 20:22 as an example).

Rabbi Simeon ben Joachi, commenting on this – “Come and see the mystery of the word Elohim; there are three degrees, and each degree by itself alone, and yet notwithstanding they are all one, and joined together in one, and are not divided from each other.”

Your ‘take-away’:

- God’s eternal existence, past, present, future – the “Ancient of Days”, the great “I AM”.
- God’s triune and yet unified nature.

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

Immediately following these fundamental truths, the Lord placed what is to many the highest hurdle of faith – that He indeed created everything. It wasn’t just some “fortuitous happenstance”, no cosmic fluke nor an incredibly ‘lucky’ series of evolutionary events.

The story is told of Sir Isaac Newton, (arguably the most intellectually brilliant man, apart from Christ, who ever lived) ridiculed by Voltaire as a ‘doting fool’ for his faith in the Almighty, who in desiring to demonstrate this principle of creation

to his ‘learned’ friends, made a handsome model of the solar system. As his companions gathered in his home, they noticed the model and praised Sir Isaac for his remarkable work. He responded by saying that he couldn’t take the credit, because it had simply appeared out of nowhere; it had just come into being on its own. His guests argued that this was baseless and ridiculous. “Of course, it didn’t just appear. There had to be some designer, some careful thought given by someone for such a masterful model to have been built!”

Then the ‘light came on’ and they realized they’d been ‘had’. For indeed, just as it was absurd to suppose that the little model had accidentally appeared out of nowhere, it was even more incredible to give credence to the idea that the marvelous complexity and intricacy of the universe appeared without a Masterful Creator behind it.

And it is all the more amazing when we consider the greatness of it all – a typical galaxy contains billions of individual stars. Our own, the Milky Way, contains some 200 billion stars. It’s shaped like a giant spiral, rotating in space, with arms reaching out as on a pinwheel. It is so large that one full rotation of that wheel would take about 250 million years. Unimpressed? How about this – the average distance between galaxies is about 20 million trillion miles; in fact, the closest galaxy to our own is the Andromeda Galaxy, about 12 million trillion miles away. Unimpressed? For every patch of sky the size of the moon, searching deeply, you could observe about a million galaxies.

Yet what is even more impressive is that our God is bigger than all of that. In Isaiah, He poses the rhetorical question, *“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured the heaven* (the visible

universe) *with a span* (spread your hand out and look at the distance between your thumb and little finger) *and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?”* (Isa 40:12) And He fills it all! The Psalmist wrote,

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” (Psa 139:7-10)

What is staggering in its profundity is that God Who is ‘bigger’ than all His creation chose to become a single cell within the womb of the virgin Mary. The infinitely huge became the microscopically small en route to the salvation of mankind.

Here, in the beginning, God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit created the universe, both seen and unseen. Of note, is the Hebrew word used for create – it is pronounced “bara” which is to create something out of nothing. Clearly, something only God can do.

Your ‘take-away’:

- It is in the nature of our God to create.
- God is far ‘bigger’ than our minds can comprehend; consequently, He’s big enough to take on your problems, your sins, if you’ll let Him, no matter ‘where you’re at.’
- God, as ‘big’ as He is, is aware of the smallest detail.

“The earth was without form and void;”

Whereas the word “bara” is used in the beginning of God’s creation,

afterward, it is always “asah” which means to refashion out of existing material. This leads to a point of some controversy in understanding this portion of scripture. You see, “was” here can mean “became”, and there are those who believe that the original creation of God became corrupted by Satan. They point to the fact that he drew one third of the angels of heaven into his darkness and propose that he may have destroyed the planet earth in his banishment thereto. Thus, it became “tohuw va bohuv” translated “without form and void”.

Others strongly assert that this is not the case and that what we have here is an intermediate state of creation which was the ‘palette’ in God’s creative hand if you would and in which He continued His work.

What is plain is that God took a planet in shapeless chaos and began His good work; and, this is telling of His divine nature. God can work with the formless void whether it’s planet earth or planet ‘John’. Compared to the perfect character of the Lord, that’s exactly what I am – a formless void and so are you. Does that seem a bit extreme in its criticality? Trust me on this – the longer you walk with Him and get to know Him, the more you realize the formless void your life was without Him.

Your ‘take away’:

- God knew you were a formless void without Him and someday you will too.

“...and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering (literally brooding) over the face of the waters.”

“Deep”, here, literally is “abyss” and refers to the vast seas which covered the whole earth. If we consider, however, the type or ‘word picture’ herein, we can see the gentile or

unbelieving nations. Throughout scripture, the ocean or seas are a type of the people alienated from God. Thus, we can’t help but sense the poetry of God’s purpose – to bring His Spirit in to those places, those lives of churning darkness and unbelief. As Jesus spoke of Him in John 16:8, “*And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*”

He broods over the darkness, not to condemn but to convict and to comfort, to bring the loving, creative power of God to bear.

Your ‘take away’:

- God’s Spirit convicts; He doesn’t condemn.

“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.”

Notice the gentle yet irresistible power in His command. We observe this same phraseology throughout the creation story. ‘Let’ is in the imperfect tense; the imperfect is used to express the ‘future’, referring not only to an action which is about to be accomplished but one which has not yet begun; as such, it expresses an action, process or condition which is incomplete. God started with light, but there was much more to come. God spoke, and as the Psalmist wrote, “*The entrance of Your Word gives light...*”

Just as the light here made manifest the formless void upon which it shone, so the entrance of God’s Word into the heart of man reveals the ruin and emptiness which sin has enjoined. The Bible says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:*” (Jer 17:9) and “*...all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.*” (Eph 5:13)

When God brings light into our unbelieving heart, it is a “let”

command. It exposes us, our sinful ways, our need for Him. Pertaining to our salvation as well, His command is in the ‘imperfect’ tense. It’s a starting point in making us a new creation. “*if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*” (2 Cor 5:17 NIV)

Your ‘take away’:

- The first step in a new creation is God’s light shining upon a formless void.
- There’s more to come.

“And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.”

Here are another couple of fundamental principles for the Christian. First, what God does is good, in fact, verse 31 says “very good”. He can’t help it; you see, He is good. Goodness is simply an attribute of His divine being. “*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*” (Psa 34:8) “*For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.*” (Psa 86:5) “*Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.*” (Psa 107:1)

And it’s a very unbalanced attribute – infinite, in fact. We need to get this down – God is good. He’s not the ‘force’ of Star Wars or a ‘divine nothingness’ of eastern mysticism or the ‘yin and the yang’. He’s totally, completely, infinitely good. Consequently, all that He does is good. The mess that sinful man and Satan have made of this world – never confuse that with God’s doing.

The second principle is that light and darkness don’t coexist. They are forever separate. This is important to consider for it is one of the devil’s schemes to confuse that matter – to attempt to bring mixture, spiritually

speaking. He desires to contaminate good with evil, light with darkness, purity with poison, and to convince man that as long as he’s got some ‘good’, some ‘light’, or some ‘purity’, it’s OK. But that notion is a huge deception – a big lie.

Consider this allegory – take a glass of pure, clean spring water and a mug of slimy, foul-smelling toxic waste. Which one would you drink? Most of us would pick the water. Now, take just a spoonful of the toxic waste and stir it into the spring water and consider, which one would you drink? Most of us would say, e-yuck! Neither one! The same is true of the divine principle – light and darkness don’t mix. Spiritually speaking, they are purely binary. There is no evil in God whatsoever, none. Conversely, you can stop looking for true goodness elsewhere. That probably sounds harsh, but when you finally realize that what Jesus said is true, “*There is none good but one, that is God.*” (Mat 19:17) you can appreciate that whatever goodness you observe is simply God at work. There is no goodness apart from Him – not in man and certainly not in Satan.

Pertaining to salvation, this is important for Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*” (John 8:12) You won’t find God mixing His light, His truth with other things. Man is continually guilty of that and Satan is perpetually so engaged. The pitiful condition of the church today is the result of such mixture. And the sorry state of some of us Christians individually is frequently due to the same.

Your ‘take-away’:

- God is good and everything He does is consequently good.

- There is no darkness whatsoever in Him.
- Light and darkness are always distinct from one another.

“God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”

We should notice the order here, the evening and the morning were the first day. Contrary to our own perspective that the day begins each morning and grows progressively darker, in God’s ‘economy’, the day starts dark and gets progressively brighter. You know, we’re going to be very surprised when we get to heaven and find out just how many of our earthly perspectives have been “upside down” (see Acts 17:6)

“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament (expanse) in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’ Thus God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.”

On the second day, God created what we call the sky. Understand that there are three entities known as heaven – the sky, the cosmos or greater universe and the spiritual place of God’s abode. Paul intimates in one of his epistles that at one point he was temporarily caught up into the third heaven – i.e. the place we commonly refer to as heaven.

Now, with the sky (or first heaven) put in place between “the waters”, you should picture a shell or canopy of water surrounding our planet with great oceans below separated by our atmosphere. Creation scientists say

this canopy shell of water could account for a ‘green house’ effect which moderated temperature changes and variations over the whole planet. It could have also filtered out much harmful cosmic radiation which some attest is responsible for our aging.

The picture here pertinent to salvation is that just as God’s Word separated the waters above from the waters on earth so it separates in the life of the believer the heavenly from the earthly, the spiritual from the carnal. Without it, by implication, there is no separation. This is especially important in the life of a new believer for we live in an age in which a lot of ‘earthly waters (teachings) are pretending to be heavenly!

Also, we should note that the whole world was covered with an ocean. Not only do waters speak of doctrine or teaching as we see in Isaiah 55:10,11 and Ephesians 5:25,26, but, as mentioned earlier, the sea specifically pictures the gentiles or unbelievers. As such, we can consider this in type as our world of faithlessness and disbelief – filled with the doctrine of the devil. The Bible says, *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt and have done abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. Every one of them has turned aside; they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one.”* (Psa 53:1-3)

And that’s exactly where we came from – the sea of faithlessness and disbelief. None of us came into the kingdom of God because we were good. Everyone found in the Book of Life was saved by God’s grace.

Your ‘take-away’:

- God’s Word discerns the heavenly from the earthly.

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear’; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.”

After the separation of the waters, it seems that the Lord created vast aquifers, subterranean water chambers which caused the earth to be pushed upward and thus appear. Later, these chambers of the deep played a role in the judgment of God in the days of Noah.

In type, the soil or earth often refers to the heart of man as in the parable of the sower found in Mathew 13. The earth being exposed speaks of what God’s Word does – it exposes what’s in the heart. *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* (Heb 4:12)

What’s in our hearts needs to be exposed for our own good because some of us can have the idea that we’re not so bad; that, after all, God made a good choice in choosing us – Ha! ‘I mean, I’m not as ‘earthy’ as that guy in the pew behind me!’

Our hearts ARE earthy. God knows it, (Psa 103:14) but we are often either deceived into thinking we’re less wretched than we are or so ashamed and embarrassed that we think we must hide it all – frankly, both attitudes are fueled by pride. Swamped beneath the tide of Satan’s lies, our hearts need to be exposed. We need confession. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1John 1:9)

Your ‘take-away’:

- Don’t let the flood of Satan’s lies and doubts keep you down and ‘under it’.
- Confess your faults, one to another, and pray for one another.
- God’s Word exposes what’s in our hearts and His purposes in so doing are good.

“Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day.”

Next, our dear Lord brought forth what was to be the food supply for all the creatures. Later in the story, man was specifically given to eat that which had life-bearing seed in it. Now, seed is another type or picture of God’s word as found in Luke 8:11. Jesus, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 said, *“Man shall not live on bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”*

Man spends the preponderance of his time seeking and taking in food that has no seed in it, no life. Glued to the tube or grabbed by gossip, there are lots of places for him to find garbage; but God wants the new man to ‘eat’ that which has life in it. The believers ‘food supply’ is God’s Word. When the church is weak, it is most often the case that believers are on a bad ‘diet’. Here in the beginning, God seems to have made it clear that

man's initial diet was to be a reminder to him of the source of life.

Not only so, but as the 'trees of God's planting' (Isa 61:3) with good food, we can bear fruit ourselves. Once cleansed in confession and by belief in the new covering of the atoning blood of Christ, we can be fruitful spiritually. However, by definition, fruit-bearing is a process requiring patience (Luke 8:15). As we read and hear, study and learn, and DO God's Word, it naturally moves the 'sap' of His Spirit through our lives producing fruit 'after His kind' – "... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." (Gal 5:22,23) It's a supernaturally natural process.

Standing close to an apple tree and listening carefully, you'll not hear it groaning or grunting, trying to push fruit out on to its branches. Unfortunately though, many believers run around doing just that - trying to produce spiritual fruit in their lives. They dash from one conference or big event to another hoping for 'McFruit'. Fruit takes time and fruit is what distinguishes the disciple. (John 15) Your 'take-away':

- There's life in the 'seed'. In order to grow, 'eat' that which has life in it.
- As trees of His planting, we can bear fruit after His kind.

"Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth'; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the

stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

As God made the sun, moon and stars, He meant for them to 'rule' the day and the night, to divide the light from the darkness, to stand for signs, seasons and provide the basis of our time-keeping.

As symbols in scripture, many scholars consider the sun as a type of Christ (e.g. Psa 72:17; 84:11; Mal 4:2), the moon as the church and the stars as picturing the angelic host. If this is the case, it is instructive that the sun rules the day while the moon rules the night. Christ said, *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night comes when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* (John 9:4,5) and to His disciples, *"You are the light of the world"* (Mat 5:14) In this present darkness, we indeed are like the moon – reflected light if you would. But the day will come when we will be like Jesus – *"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."* (Mat 13:43)

Now, when is the moon dimmest? -- when the earth comes between it and the sun. So it is with the church and our Lord. The dominion or rule of the church has been best when it fully reflects the light of Christ. Conversely, it can be all but absent when the world gets in the way.

As for signs and seasons, recall that the wise men from the orient knew of the birth of Jesus because of a star. They understood the sign. It is tragic, however, that people have relied on astrological signs to guide their lives. That was never God's intent and it is a

false, deceitful practice which is leveraged by Satan to manipulate the gullible. At best, signs always point to something, they are indicators – not the 'real deal'. The Lord has put the substance and direction for our lives in His Word. Though the magi recognized that a great King was born by observing the star, only the scripture could direct them to the town of Bethlehem and only the prophetic Word could have told them of God's marvelous plan of redemption.

As the heavenly lights were to provide the signposts for the creation so the light of His Word provides the parameters, the directions to guide our lives as believers both during times of 'light' and 'dark'. The Scripture says, *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."* (Psa 1:1,2) Your 'take-away':

- You can only shine upon the world around you as much as you are fully facing the Son.
- Signs are not substance – go to the Word.

"Then God said, 'Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.' 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 God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' So the evening and the morning were the fifth day."

God's first command to any living creature was again a revealer of His heart. "Be fruitful and multiply." How often we can be tempted to picture God as against us or down on us when in truth His desire is for us, for our fruitfulness and fulfillment. He even made the things He commanded us to do enjoyable!

We should note also that the living creatures were made "according to their kind". In other words, a tuna was a tuna and a stork was a stork. And tuna only make more tuna and storks only make more storks (of course, they bring baby boys and girls too! – ha!). God established the fruitful order of nature and when the order is confused, it becomes unfruitful. For instance a horse may mate with a donkey but the resulting mule is sterile – mules don't make more mules.

Just as God's Word here produced an abundance of living creatures, so it will produce in the life of a sincere believer an abundance of life. Jesus said, *"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* (John 10:9,10)

This abundance is not what some preachers profess – material riches, perfect health, worldly power, prestige (whether though 'ministry' or the 'world'). If God chooses to bless a person in such a way, that's fine; but this abundance refers to far more important things: *"...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with*

all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Eph 3:17-21)

As God restores a soul, He brings abundance of life, love and the fullness of Himself – this is where the pastures are green and the waters still and deep (Psa 23). This is how a born again believer’s life takes on beautiful purpose.

Your ‘take-away’:

- God desires a life for you abundant in His good treasure.

“Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind’; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”

With increasing vigor, scientists are crossing the borders of creation, planting human tissue in animals, mixing animal and human genes, cloning man and animal without regard to the consequences. You can’t help but think, ‘this is going to be unfruitful’ to say the least. We can imagine that we’re pretty ingenious in altering genetic codes and unraveling the mysteries of the human genome but messing with the natural order or “proper domain” of creation is one of the reasons the Abusso or bottomless pit is filled with especially nasty demons. “*And the angels who did not keep their proper (own) domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved*

in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

Jude 6

“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.”

Like God, man is a triune being. In creating him, the LORD took the lowest part of creation, the dust of the earth, and combined it with the highest possible ‘ingredient’, the breath of His Spirit. Together, they made a ‘living being’ or literally a living soul. So man’s being is triune in that he has a spirit, a soul, and a body.

Man was not designed to die; that’s one reason we are frustrated by time. People rush faster and faster to get nowhere in particular; we strive with schedules that are ever more crowded and stressful. The confines of time and more specifically, the time of death is ‘instinctively’ alien and troubling partly because we were not created for it. We were formed to commune with our Creator apart from the callous demands of an expected life span.

Originally, Adam’s spirit was the primary influence upon his soul or character. The spirit, being the seat of his will and what we would think of as his deepest part, was in direct fellowship with God Who is also Spirit (John 4:24).

Ah, but the soul, being created by the combination of both the spirit and the dust (or flesh) is influenced by both as well. Now, initially, man’s body, though ‘dusty’ was without sin and did not struggle against the spirit’s control

over his soul. This is what the Bible calls being spiritually minded “...to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Rom 8:6) However, when Adam rebelled against God, just as God promised, he died – first, and immediately, he died spiritually which meant separation from God. Secondly, he eventually died physically as well. Though 930 years old, he died within the same prophetic day (see 2 Pet 3:8).

Ever since, man’s soul has been the pivotal battle ground. As his spirit died, his sin-filled flesh then reigned over his soul. He became carnally minded and “...to be carnally minded is death...”

But praise God for the Gospel! When someone responds to the good news and welcomes Jesus Christ into their life, believing in Him as the risen Lord and Savior, Christ sends the Holy Spirit into that person bringing new life to his spirit. From that point on, the believer is no longer a captive slave to the sinful flesh; the sincere believer is free not to sin.

And with this freedom comes a struggle. Paul wrote, “*Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts (wars) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish...Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*” (Gal 5:16-23)

Your ‘take-away’:

- “if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the

Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Rom 8:10)

“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.’”

This is fascinating! Man was told to “subdue” the earth. At this point, with no sin in the new creation, the world was at peace. It would seem that this term subdue did not seem to apply to the animal kingdom. In fact, to clarify, the Lord said,

“Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

The Hebrew word for subdue means to tread down and conquer, whereas the word dominion implies simply a ruling over. Some Bible scholars believe this is speaking of a directive for man to subdue the evil spiritual entities that occupied the planet (See Job 1:6,7). This is indeed consistent with other uses of this verb, to subdue, in the scripture (e.g. Micah 7:19)

Imagine lions and tigers eating grass and fruit! This was paradise. All was in harmony. There was no ‘food chain’. Every creature ate of what grew from the earth. When Christ returns, He may re-establish this order for Isaiah, in speaking of His millennial reign, recorded, “*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put*

his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa 11:6-9)

Though man miserably failed in carrying out this command, the Son of Man, Jesus Christ succeeded. On Calvary's cross, He crushed the head of the serpent, Satan and destroyed the works of darkness. His dominion shall be an everlasting one!

Your 'take-away':

- God gave the command both to subdue and have dominion and He also provided the Man to fulfill it, His Son.

“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

Though the created order as we know it was thus fulfilled, God is ever creative and always at work. In presenting to us the chronicle of creation, He put forth the pattern for His creative/redemptive work in the heart of man as well – His divine design. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2Cor 5:17) Very, very GOOD!*

If your world is in a mess, it could be that God has allowed it in order to demonstrate to you His love and goodness. Let the light in, let the word of God into your dark, let Him separate the truth from the lies and bring your sin to your attention so you can confess and forsake it. Let Him produce in you an abundance of life and the wonderful fruit of His Spirit. Let Jesus subdue and have dominion – make Christ, the Savior and Lord of your life. When you do, you'll realize a truly divine design.