

# DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

APRIL 2024 | GENESIS 1:26-31

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

GENESIS 1:26

## *THE STORY HAS A PURPOSE*

The epic story of the Bible is the story of everything. It is about God and everything He created. It gives meaning to every event in history and weaves the narrative of how heaven and earth dance to a tune that makes everything make sense. In a society that reels from the skepticism of post-modernity, which demands that we embrace "the incredulity of the metanarrative," we desperately need a single story that gives meaning to us humans stumbling around in a fog.

In the book of beginnings, we find a summary statement about the purpose of creation and the design for humans in relationship to it:

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and 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.*

*And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have*

*dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

Genesis 1:26-31, ESV

The original design for humans is for partnership with God in developing the creation to its fullest potential. That is still the design though the human race has been deceived, defeated, defiled, and desecrated. Any talk of redemption that restores humans to original intent must include their restored purpose on earth, as God again works through human instrumentality to accomplish His end.

The story of the Garden of Eden presents humans as the crown of creation - conscious of the presence of God, confident in the provision from God, content in the protection of God, captivated by purpose with God. Made to live in intimacy with God himself, Adam and Eve delighted in knowing and being known fully by God. There was no sense of loneliness or isolation. There was no hunger for something greater than they already had. They were delighted in by the One who is complete joy. They also were aware that God had provided everything they would ever need to satisfy every taste bud they had. There was fruit of every kind on the trees in the garden. Worry for provision was not even a part of their concern. They lived with a calm sense of safety. Nothing outside of God's good hand could touch them. But, to what end? God chose to do His work on earth through humans. The creation is designed to be managed and developed by humans—in partnership with God.

God allowed a serpent to be in the garden who provided the first test for His human partners. If the Deceiver could somehow separate humans from the conscious presence of God, then everything else would crumble. They would be ashamed, fearful, anxious,

afraid, and wonder about their worth and their purpose. But God took the first failure of Adam and Eve and utilized it for His greater purpose. From that point on, humans would be the instruments to defeat the serpent and his world, as they continued to honor creation and work with God to bring it to its intended glory. God made a promise to Adam, Eve, and the Serpent:

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*

Genesis 3:15, ESV

From this point on, the story portrays the promise being fulfilled in many partial ways throughout history and fully fulfilled in Jesus alone. With Noah, we see a world deserving punishment, yet God uses the human Noah to save a remnant to begin over. He will one day have a seed that will crush the head of Satan. Abraham receives a promise that continues the story. Abraham will have a family through which that crushing seed will ultimately come. The exodus of Abraham's clan from Egypt reveals another step toward the fulfillment of the promise. God makes a covenant with Moses so he can bless an obedient human with all his

blessings. No one in Israel could do it, but one Israelite did come who would fully obey the covenant and receive all the blessings heaven contains: Jesus. The story takes thousands of years and includes many characters, but they all refer to Jesus who, one day on a cross outside the gates of Jerusalem, crushed the head of Satan with the sacrifice of His own blood and the power of divine love unleashed. He didn't stop there as He defeated death by His resurrection and ascended to the throne of God to rule over all that His blood bought. He then sent His Spirit to empower believing humans on earth to do the good works He had prepared for them to do since the beginning:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God not a result of works. So that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Ephesians 2:8-10, ESV

On the last night Jesus and His disciples were together before His crucifixion, He promised them that He was restoring them to normal humans

as designed and redeemed by God:

*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

John 14:12-13, ESV

He promises that He will be with them restoring the intimacy lost in the Garden of Eden. He gives them access to all His provisions and tells them that not even a hair on their heads can be arbitrarily harmed by anything outside His protection. And He restates their purpose of representing Him on earth with the authority that He alone gives them.

After His ascension, He sent His Holy Spirit who through them marched through the known world, pushing back darkness and overcoming evil with His goodness. People were redeemed. Societies were reclaimed. Structures were created to channel the new life that was springing up in response to the gospel. The sick were healed and loved. Children were educated. Women were recognized as joint heirs in life. The poor were identified and featured in loving compassion. Governmental and business models were affected

by the virtues flowing out of the men and women who were human again. The story of the gospel doesn't leave us cowered in a room afraid of what the devil might do, wanting to escape. Nor are we middle school kids standing around the dance floor feeling unqualified to dance. We are more than conquerors through Him. He has captured us by His love, defeated our enemy by His power, and marches us through the marketplaces of the world to spread the sweet aroma of His grace in the stinky alleys of human hopelessness.

This meta-story not only makes sense, but imparts life to those who hear and believe.

KERYGMA VENTURES

P.O. Box 2022

Colleyville, TX 76034

(817)267-9224

Email: [Contact@kerygmaventures.com](mailto:Contact@kerygmaventures.com)

[www.KerygmaVentures.com](http://www.KerygmaVentures.com)