

# **Biblical Anthropology:**

## **Part 2 - A Special Purpose**

**In answer to our second question:** “Why Am I Here?”

The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks this same question and answers it like this:

**“The chief end of Man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”**

While I may agree with this statement, and while one can find passages that describe man giving glory to God, I cannot say that I find any direct statements that specifically state this as true. One passage cited by the Westminster Shorter Catechism cites the following passage from Isaiah 60, specifically focusing on verse 19.

### **The Bible’s Stated Overall Reason for Man’s Creation**

(and it wasn’t because God was lonely!)

**Gen. 1:26: “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 and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”**

**To Have Rule** [raw-daw] To have dominion over, dominate

**Man was created To be an authoritative Regent of all that God had created on Earth. As an image bearer, man was the true representation to all the world of the One who had created it. He was rational, creative, intelligent, powerful, feeling and purposeful in what he did. Also note that verses 27-28 make it very clear that both men and women have this purpose.**

Additionally, God gave man this 4-fold commission: **“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”** Genesis 1:28

- 1. Be Fruitful** [paw-raw] To flourish, bear fruit
- 2. To Multiply** [raw-baw] To increase, be great, grow
- 3. To Replenish** [maw-lay] To fill, be full
- 4. To Subdue** [kaw-bash] To bring into subjection, into bondage

### **Observations**

In God’s proclamation, man was ordained to “rule over”, “have dominion over”, “be masters over” His whole animal creation. What authority is missing from this commission? What might be the reason for this?

From the beginning, God intended for the human race to flourish. Man's "rule" over creation was thereby never intended to be the task of just one man, but it is the task of all men ("let them rule").

Bringing creative order out of chaos is the natural instinct of man and a healthy person will exercise an inclination toward that (at least in some areas). Even the biggest slob will have order in some small area of his life.

This commission from God was never rescinded in scripture, meaning that mankind is still responsible to some degree for that task. However, two major changes have resulted from his choice to disobey God:

**Man has given his control of the world over to Satan** (Jn.12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Cor. 4:4)

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**God has subjected creation to futility.** When did He do this?

**Dr. Charles Ryrie states ...**

"... the image of God involves man's being given dominion over the earth and his capacity for moral action, both of which have been disturbed by the entrance of sin so that he lost his dominion and corrupted his moral abilities."

**Additionally, Dr. John MacArthur says ...**

"... [man] was given dominion and authority over God's created world and by that fact is the reflected glory of God. In other words, he bears the role of ruler in this world. The fall hasn't changed that. The man still bears authority after the fall."

If Dr. MacArthur is correct, what implications does this have when addressing the age-old question, "How can evil and suffering exist if God is all-powerful and good"?

Answer: Because God gave man regency on Earth, it is man's choice of who he is going to be dependent upon. Just as darkness is the natural consequence of there being no light, evil and suffering are the natural consequences of the absence of God. God is not obligated to intervene in the affairs of men. Whenever He does, it is an act of grace.

### **The Bible's Stated Reason for the Creation of Men**

Simply put, Adam was created to be a gardener. In Gen. 2:5, we are given the need that had arisen which occasioned for the necessity for the creation of man:

**"Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground."**

In addressing this need, we are then told in verse 15 that ...

**"Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it."**

### **Observations**

1. A man's purpose in life is divinely tied to his work.

2. Before the fall, Man's work was always fruitful [implied by the curse placed on man after the fall; Gen. 3:17-19]
3. Manhood involves "cultivation" [to work, serve, cultivate] Manhood involves "keeping" [to protect, defend, guard, preserve]
4. Man was created as a relational being (Genesis 2:18). In all of the 6 days of creation, this is the only time that God said, "It is not good".

In Summary, Man was created to be so tied in with his creator that he would walk with a full sense of adequacy and assurance of his creative purpose, experiencing fruitfulness in his labors and enjoying the blessing of relationship with the woman whom God made specifically for him and from him. The man was designed to cultivate and keep his garden, and was likewise to cultivate and guard his relationship with his wife.

Cultivation and protection/preservation were the two major thrusts of what it meant to be a man, in both his work and relationships, all under a walk of dependency on the creator.

### **The Bible's Stated Reason for Creation of Women**

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

Two words used in scripture to describe the approach that the woman would take in nurturing her relationship with the man:

**"Helper"** [ay'-zer]: to help, assist, aid.

"It is your destruction, O Israel,

That you are against Me, against **your help**." Hosea 13:9

**"Suitable"** [neh'-ghed]: *Corresponding to him* i.e. equal and adequate to himself. In contrast to the animals who were not "suitable" to him (Genesis 1:20).

### **Observations**

1. A woman's purpose in life is divinely tied to her relationship with her husband.
2. Before the fall, there were no relational problems between the man and his wife (paradise indeed!).
3. Womanliness involves the concept of helping the man to achieve through a helpful attitude (1 Pet. 3:6).
4. Woman was created as a dependent being (in need of protection, provision and relational fulfillment under both God and man).
5. Woman's purpose in life is divinely tied to her husband's work.

### **Other Gleanings from Genesis 2**

1. Woman was taken out of the Man so that she would share his attributes and DNA, but she would be different (vs. 23).

2. Neither God nor anything else in creation could satisfy the relational and purposeful need in man except a woman (vs. 22).
3. From the beginning, marriage has been declared to be with one person only (vs. 24).
4. Because of the way that God designed them, the man was to be the one to leave his father and mother, not the woman (vs. 24).
5. Nudity was not a shameful thing before the fall (but it is now, vs. 25).

**Next Week**  
**Biblical Anthropology:**  
**Part 3 - The Fall of Man**