

### 3. The Nature and Original Character of Man—How Did We Get Here?

#### 1) **What is God's Relationship to Creation? Where Did Everything Come From?**

**Gen 1:1** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

**John 1:3** "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being"

**Acts 14:15** "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM."

**Acts 17:24-26, 28** <sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup>nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; <sup>26</sup>and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation... <sup>28</sup>for in Him we live and move and exist"

**Rom 1:20** "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

**Col 1:16-17** <sup>16</sup>For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup>He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together"

**Heb 1:3** "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power"

**Heb 11:3** "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

**Rev 4:11** "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

#### Summary of these passages:

- We can understand "everything" in this way: there is **God** and *everything that is not God* (which He created)
- Everything is the result of God's miraculous creation
- Creation was made out of **nothing** by God's supernatural and instantaneous work
- Nothing came into existence on its own—everything was **directly** made by God
- God **sustains** all creation—no aspect of life can support itself apart from God
- As creation was made by God it bears witness (testifies, tells) that there is a God
- God as creator and sustainer of all things is the fundamental **starting** point of the gospel message

Statement: *God Created and Sustains Everything*

Some clarifications:

**Evolution** – the idea that the universe and life came into being through natural processes

Evolution is an explanation of origins that attempts to describe the beginning of all things without any reference to God or other non-material/supernatural explanations. The supernatural is ruled out as it cannot be verified, proven, or reduplicated.

The fact is, however, is that the idea of evolution also has not been nor can be verified, proven, or reduplicated. It is simply the **belief** of individuals who do not believe (or refuse to acknowledge) in the existence of the one true God, the God the Bible speaks of.

## 2) God's Purpose and Relationship to Mankind

### • What Makes Me Different from Other Living Beings?

**Gen 1:27** “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

**Gen 2:7** “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (or, *soul*)” (cf. 1 Cor 15:45)

**1 Thess 5:23** “may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”

**Heb 4:12** “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

**Jas 2:26** “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead”

The *image of God* means that we, like God, are **personal** (mind, will, emotions), **spiritual**, and **moral**. Animals are not persons, cannot relate spiritually with God, and do not have a built in sense of right and wrong.

Man is a material being, but he is not *just* that. He is also a *spiritual* being.

As a *person* man has emotions, the ability to think rationally, plan, use language, and make decisions.

When God created the first two human beings, Adam and Eve, they were absolutely perfect—there was no defect or limitation that kept them from being exactly what God created them to be and do.

Statement: *Only human beings are made in the image of God.*

- **Why Am I Alive?**

**Acts 17:26-27** <sup>26</sup>and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth... <sup>27</sup>that they would seek God”

**1 Cor 10:31** “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

**Rev 4:11** “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

To *seek God* means to live for God, enjoy a relationship with Him, serve Him, and honor Him. In essence, it means to have a right relationship with God, to know Him.

To *glorify God* means to have godly thoughts, desires, and actions, to be in line with God’s will and reflect God’s character.

God created human beings to reflect His character in every part of their lives and to enable them to understand, accept, and follow His will.

Statement: *You are alive to glorify God. God made you to glorify Him with your entire life.*

- **What is God’s Relationship to Mankind?**

We began this study with a survey of different ideas people have of God. Some view Him as just one among many deities; others view God as merely a sort of celestial grandpa, kind and loving to everyone, non-judgmental, and accessible through many different paths. A growing number do not believe God exists at all.

It is therefore absolutely true that **one’s belief about God affects the direction and character of life.**

Thus far we have seen that the Bible describes God as the creator and sustainer of everything and as creating human beings in His image so that they would glorify God through their lives.

God’s relationship to mankind, in addition to creator and sustainer, involves the following passages:

**Ps 9:8** “He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.”

**Ps 96:13** “He is coming to judge the earth He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.”

**Acts 10:42** “He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.”

**Acts 17:31** “He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness”

**Heb 9:27** “inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment”

Because God is the creator and sustainer of human life, all mankind is **accountable** to God for how they have lived their lives.

Statement: *God is man’s creator and judge—every person is accountable to God.*

#### 4. Sin: Its Nature and Effects—What Happened? Why Don’t We See God’s Original Intention for Creation?

God is all-powerful and perfect—the result of His creation of the universe was that “*God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good*” (Gen 1:31).

There were **no** defects or deficiencies in God’s creation.

At the beginning of human existence, God and man had a perfect relationship, the earth was pristine and unpolluted, everything was in perfect balance. There were no wars or disturbances—nothing but peace and tranquility—it was paradise on earth.

However, such clearly is not the case today. **Rom 8:20-21** “<sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

##### 1) **What happened to God’s perfect creation? To man’s harmonious relationship with God? What went wrong?**

**Gen 3:17-19** “<sup>17</sup>Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat from it”; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup>Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup>by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’”

**Rom 5:12** “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned”

**Ps 14:1-3** “<sup>1</sup>The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good. <sup>2</sup>The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. <sup>3</sup>They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

What “happened” is that mankind rejected and rebelled against God’s rightful claim as their Lord and Master. In the Garden of Eden—a perfect paradise—a simple command of God was disobeyed in order to selfishly get something that wasn’t theirs. The creature sought to be **equal** to the Creator. Not only was a simple command broken, but Adam and Eve’s belief in Satan’s words was an attack on God’s very character—

**Gen 3:1-5** “<sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'"<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;<sup>3</sup>but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"<sup>4</sup>The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!<sup>5</sup>"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Satan doubted God’s truthfulness (3:1), called Him a liar (3:4), and portrayed Him as fearful of man becoming like Him (3:5). And instead of resisting the devil (cf. James 4:7), Eve was deceived by him (1 Tim 2:14) but Adam disobeyed God with a full awareness of what he was doing.

“What happened” is that the first man and woman disobeyed God’s revealed **will** and failed to reflect God’s **character** of holiness and truth.

Adam and Eve as the first human beings were charged by God with “ruling” the earth, and as the representatives of humanity and the world “*sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men*” (Rom 5:12).

What response did the first human beings have to God after their rebellion?

**Gen 3:8-10** “<sup>8</sup>They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"<sup>10</sup>He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”

Instead of enjoying a perfect, right, harmonious relationship with God, Adam and Eve were fearful of God and sought to stay away from Him. This happened because they chose to do what they wanted to do instead of joyfully and submissively obeying God.

What happened, then, to God’s perfect creation? To man’s harmonious relationship with God? What went wrong?

- **Statement:** *Because Adam disobeyed and rebelled against God, he became a sinner and sin corrupted the world.*

## 2) What is Sin?

**Rom 3:23** “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

**1 John 3:4** “Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.”

**1 John 5:17** “All unrighteousness is sin”

- **Statement:** *Sin is the failure to **conform** to God’s holy character and is the **transgression** of his holy will.*