

# God's Covenants

## The Covenant of Creation - Part 1

### Key idea:

In creation, God entered into a covenant with humanity as the image of God, calling us to worshipful obedience through proper relationships with creation, other humans, and God Himself.

### Key text:

Genesis 1:26–2:3; Genesis 2:15–17

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. <sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day.

<sup>2:1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

### **Key points:**

1. God entered into a covenant with humanity in creation.
2. Humans occupy a special place in God's creation as His image-bearers given authority over creation, but we are under God's authority and have covenant obligations we owe to Him.
3. Humans are called to rule creation. This means we have been given kingly power and authority over creation, and that our work is a form of worship to God.
4. Humans are called to care for creation, watching over and protecting it as something precious and for which we will give account.
5. There are two great errors humans make in their relationship to creation: we tend to either worship it and view humans as a blight and problem, or we view it as raw material and refuse to recognize its inherent worth and the limits God has placed on our use of it.
6. Our call to both rule and care for creation is essential to our humanity, has been fulfilled by Jesus as part of His redemptive work, and will continue into eternity.

### **Questions for discussion/application:**

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. How does God view creation? Is creation inherently good or evil? How do many religions answer this question?
3. Humans are called to rule and care for creation. Which of these do I think most Christians today tend to stress? Which do I tend to stress in my thought? Which concept do I find more difficult - rule or care for?
4. Why do idols so often come in the form of created things? How is this related to the call for humans to rule the creation? Why are fallen humans tempted to worship created things?
5. What is wrong with the phrase "it's all gonna burn!" Why is this phrase profoundly unbiblical? What view of creation underlies this phrase?
6. Bret mentioned Hebrews 2:5-9 as teaching that Jesus' work as redeemer is related to our covenant responsibilities towards creation. What other biblical texts relate Jesus' work to creation? What does this tell me about creation?

7. How does this week's text relate to my work? Is my work merely a means of providing finances, or is it something more? How is my work a form of worship to God?
8. Is God's covenant only concerned with "religious" life, or does it cover all of life? Why does this matter? How should this affect my approach to life? To culture? To other human beings? To my work? To creation?
9. Whom can I pray for, share what I have learned, and invite to church this week?

**Preview of next week: The Covenant of Creation - Part 2 (Genesis 1:26-2:3; 2:15-17)**