



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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## Genesis 1:26-31; 2:4-7 New American Standard Version September 16, 2018

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 16, 2018**, is from **Genesis 1: 26-31; 2:4-7**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

**(Genesis 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.”**

When God completed creation on the sixth day, God showed that the creation of people was the goal toward all God had created previously, for people were to rule over all of God's creatures. As God is Sovereign over all that exists, God intended people to be sovereign over all the living creatures God created. “Us” includes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in consultation with one another, which shows the vast importance of their creating people and the fact that despite the consequences all three Persons agreed to create the human race. Furthermore, they created people in their “image and likeness” — two words that emphasize this amazing fact. Jesus is the image of the invisible God in a way similar to the first man God created (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). When God who is Spirit takes on

human form, God looks like the people He created. When God revealed himself to Abraham, God took on human form as a man (Genesis 18:1). Angels are ministering spirits, but they sometimes appear in human form, so people can entertain angels unawares (Hebrews 1:14 & Hebrews 13:2). God created people with all the intellect, power, physical attributes, and abilities they need to achieve His purposes, and their intellect, power, and abilities are similar to those of their Sovereign God, who created people in their image in miniature.

**(Genesis 1:27) God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

With the body, mind, and spirit God gave to male and female, God equipped them with the power and intellect to rule over the creatures God had made. Like God rules over us, people rule over the creatures, and people represent the true God on earth. Among other abilities, God gave people the ability to think, to feel, to make decisions, to obey commands, to love, to worship God, to evaluate their work, and abilities that we see God manifesting in the Bible and in nature. As sovereign rulers over the creatures God created, people have finite limitations under the authority of God, their Creator and Sovereign Lord.

**(Genesis 1:28) God blessed them; and God said to them, “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.”**

When God says the same thing more than once, God does so for emphasis. Just as God commanded the fish, birds, animals, and every other living creature to reproduce, so God said mankind should increase in number, be creative, bear good fruit by their choices, fill the earth, and rule over all the earth and all creatures. Following their Lord’s example, they were to execute a benevolent and wise authority over all God’s creation under the Lordship of God, who would rule over them in ways that would bless them and make them happy, even as people were to serve as God’s blessing and bring happiness to the earth.

**(Genesis 1:29) Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;**

As we will learn later in Genesis, God gave the living creatures to be companions of man and woman. They did not become the best friends of the man, so God made the woman, then together they could be best friends. Prior to the sin of Adam and Eve, and prior to the great flood in the days of Noah, people were permitted to eat only vegetables and fruits. God did not want people to eat their friends, their companions, or one another. Those who did evil only continually before the great flood in the days of Noah may have eaten many different forbidden meats in rebellion against God (Genesis 6:5).

**(Genesis 1:30) and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so.**

“And it was so” — in creating the heavens, the earth, and the first people, everything happened exactly as God planned. Every green plant could include grasses for cattle and plants that God provided in the water and on land especially for all the other creatures God had made. Likewise, the creatures of the earth, the skies, and the water were not to eat one another, or eat the people God had created to rule over them. People and animals changed after Adam and Eve sinned, but people were not permitted to eat meat until after the flood in Noah’s day, and God gave Moses special restrictions on what meats the Hebrews could eat.

**(Genesis 1:31) God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.**

At the end of the sixth day, after God had created the heavens and the earth, and all that God made leading up to God’s crowning achievement, the creation of people in God’s image, for the first time God said all He had done was not just good, but **very good**. If problems arose later in God’s creation, the reasons were not because God had not made everything *very*

good, but because the people God created with amazing abilities and freedoms misused their authority, their freedoms, and disobeyed God.

**(Genesis 2:4) This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.**

In Genesis 2:1-3, we learn that God rested from all God's creative work and set an example for people to follow. In the Law that God gave Moses, God set aside one day of every seven for our good, for people to rest and worship God. In Genesis, we sometimes find the writer telling us what he is going to tell us, and then telling us once again in greater detail and with more explanations. Historically, many good sermons or speeches use this same method. Beginning with verse 4, Genesis expands and explains in more detail what God revealed in step-by-step outline in Genesis 1. For example, we learn more about the creation of male and female and the extra effort God used when creating the first man and woman.

**(Genesis 2:5) 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.**

God explained again that God did not create everything at once in the blink of an eye as God could have chosen to do. Rather, God created everything in a logical order and sequence over time without leaving out any steps in the process; steps that appear would have taken a long time unless God had created the heavens and the earth and all that exists on and within them. God created shrubs and plants that would need water, so God created the water first. Then, God created many of the shrubs and plants for the future purposes of people who would work the ground. Water and plants were created for people to use; in this verse God restates their purpose.

**(Genesis 2:6) But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.**

It may be that God did not send rain upon the earth until the days of Noah. Streams watered the whole surface of the ground in ways similar to the Nile River that floods periodically and waters the fields of Egypt, or irrigation projects of today that water fields that get very little rain. God watered the earth with streams to make plants grow and help animals and people who need plants for food and water to drink. Of course, people and animals can also drink water from lakes and streams.

**(Genesis 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.**

The first man was formed from the dust of the ground by God. Apart from the life that God gives them, people are nothing but dust, just like the animals that the earth produced after God's command. But God took special interest in the first man by personally forming him from the dust of the ground, not by creating man out of nothing or by commanding the land to bring forth man. God formed man from the earth as someone might make a clay idol, pot, or sculpture, but God breathed life into the man God had made and man became a living being capable of loving, obeying, increasing in numbers on the face of the earth, and worshiping God (unlike the idols that disobedient men would make from the dust of the ground and worship). No idol can make a living being from dust, only the Almighty God has the power to create something from nothing or create a living person from dust. Later, Jesus would breathe the Holy Spirit into His followers, which reminds us of how God breathed the breath of life into the first man (John 20:22).

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Why did God create people in the image and likeness of God?
2. What abilities or qualities do you think God gave people?

3. What were animals and people to eat on the earth? Why do you think God gave them this food?
4. On the sixth day, how did God describe everything He had created? Why might this be important for people to know?
5. Name at least two ways the first man differed from the animals.

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly  
*International Bible Lesson.*

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