

Christians At Texas State Bible Study—Genesis #4

God's Purpose Fulfilled by Vessels Containing God

Gen. 2

7 Jehovah God formed man with the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Prov. 20

27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.

Zech. 12

1 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him.

Job 32

8 But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

John 4

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Acts 9

15 But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.

Rom. 9

21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? 23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory.

Rom. 8

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery *bringing you* into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father! 16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

2 Tim. 4

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

To be on the line of life is to be a dependent person. If you are truly dependent, you will have a fundamental realization within that you cannot live without God as your life supply. This message is not given on the basis of a gift that can be exercised apart from God or on the basis of knowledge that is stored up in the mind and that can be presented with enticing words. A message on life must be delivered out of life, sentence by sentence and word by word. The line of life is the line of dependence on God for our very being moment by moment. When Daniel came in to interpret the mysterious writing to King Belshazzar, he told him, "The God in whose hand is your breath and to whom all your ways belong, you have not honored" (Dan. 5:23). We can not live without Him. May the Lord give us all sweet times alone with Him in which we tell Him, "Lord, I love You, and I cannot live without You. I need You as my breath, as my drink, and as my food. Separated from You, I die."

God's Purpose

God's intention in making man is to have a vessel that can contain Him and express Him (Rom. 9:21,23). In this message we want to stress this one crucial point—the man created by God is a vessel. Among many of us this concept is absent. Many Christians think that man should be used by God as an instrument. The highest thought we may have is that man should be God's servant. But the thought of man being a vessel of God is not with us as much. In God's

thought man is mainly a container, not just a means or an instrument. Unless man can be a vessel, a container to contain God and to be filled up with God, man can never be used by God to fulfill His purpose.

Man was Created in a Specific Way

Genesis 2:7 says, "Jehovah God formed man with the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The Hebrew word for *formed* in this verse means "to form as a potter shapes a vessel." Thus, the thought of a vessel being molded is in this verse. We need to have a deep realization of what a human being is, and we need to help others to have this realization. A human being is a vessel. The only way to be truly human is to have our vessel filled with God. For anything other than God to fill our being would dehumanize us. It is human to need God. Human beings are designed, created, molded, and formed as God-containing vessels.

God formed man's body with the dust of the ground that man may have a body as his outward expression and as an organ to contact material things. God made man with dust, not with gold. Gold cannot produce life. If you sow seed into gold, you will waste the seed. Dust, however, can grow life. If you sow seed into the dust, the seed will grow. We are not a man of gold, but a man of dust. I am happy to be a man of dust. I am an earthen vessel. Hallelujah!

Our body was formed out of dust to be our outward expression. When I have the time, I like to look at myself in the mirror, especially examining my face. The more I look at myself, the more I am convinced that I was made by God. No other person in the whole universe can fashion such a wonderful creature. The style of American cars may be improved and changed every year, but no one can improve the design of a human being. Our ears have been perfectly designed for listening. How awkward it would be if the members of our body were relocated! What would happen if our nose were placed upon our forehead and turned upward? The rain and the dust would come in. God purposely designed the nose to be turned downward that only air may enter in. Although my nose is not very attractive, I am still fond of it. God designed it for me.

Man was created by God. He was designed by the best artist. Do not pay attention to the theory of evolution. Even medical science can confirm that the human body contains all the elements found in dust such as salt, sulfur, copper, and iron. God formed a wonderful human body out of this dust. I have no words to describe it. Look at yourself. Look at your shoulders, arms, and the five fingers on each hand. With the four fingers and a thumb man can do anything. What could we do if we had five thumbs on each hand? We could not even pick up our eating utensils. If you examine your human body, you will find that it is a living bottle. We were truly made by God.

God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life that man may have a spirit as the recipient for him to receive God and as an organ to contact God and the spiritual things (John 4:24; Rom. 1:9). Within a transistor radio, there is a receiver. When this receiver is damaged, the radio waves cannot get through. Likewise, our body is an outward container and within us is a spirit made by God as a receiver to receive God as the heavenly radio waves. By means of this organ we may contact spiritual things. I contact a blackboard with my hand. I contact odors with my nose, colors with my eyes. I substantiate sounds with my ears. All these material things can be substantiated by the senses in our physical body. In the universe there are also spiritual things. There is God in this universe, and God is Spirit. We cannot substantiate Him through our physical senses. It is foolish to deny the existence of God because we cannot substantiate Him in a physical way. To say that something does not exist because we cannot sense it is foolhardy. Although there are many radio waves in the atmosphere, we cannot substantiate them without a receiver. Likewise, we cannot substantiate God without the proper receiver, our human spirit. If our spirit does not function well, we will be unable to sense God. We need to tune our spirit. We need to exercise our spirit to contact God. Within us there is such an organ called by the Bible the spirit of man (Job 32:8).

The Breath of Life and the Spirit of Man

In Hebrew the word breath in Genesis 2:7 is *neshamah*, which is translated "spirit" in Proverbs 20:27. This means that the breath in Genesis 2:7 is the human spirit, and this spirit is the lamp of the Lord. In ancient times people used oil lamps. The lamp contained oil which was burned to give light. Within us we have a lamp to contain the Spirit of God as the oil. Although we have such a lamp within us, we need the divine oil to come into it, enabling the lamp to burn and shine. Proverbs 20:27 says that the spirit of man searches all the inward parts of our being. When God as oil comes in to ignite our lamp, we will be enlightened and searched. The Bible tells us clearly that the breath of God has become our human spirit and that our spirit is God's lamp to contain God as the oil and to give us light.

The Spirit of Man Was Specifically Formed by God

The spirit of man was specifically formed by God (Zech. 12:1; Job 32:8). Zechariah 12:1 says that God stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. In this universe are three equally important things: the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for

man, and man has a spirit for God. God created the heavens for the earth. Without the heavens the earth cannot grow anything. The earth is for man, and man has a spirit within him to contain God. Thus, man is the center of the entire universe, and the center of man is his spirit. This is very important. As far as God is concerned, if there were no spirit within man, man would be an empty shell. If there were no man on this earth, the earth would be a void and the heavens useless. We praise the Lord that the heavens serve the earth, the earth serves man, and man has a spirit to receive God. Praise the Lord that "there is a spirit in man"!

The Spirit of Man Is Where the Spirit of God Works and the Lord Stays

The spirit of man is where the Spirit of God works. Romans 8:16 says that the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit works with the human spirit. Second Timothy 4:22 says, "The Lord be with your spirit." The Lord Jesus is now with our spirit. This is where He dwells.

Thus, a Coca-Cola bottle is a vessel made to contain Coke. Man is not a Coca-Cola bottle. Man is a "God-bottle." Man is a bottle made of clay. This bottle has something wonderful within it. Genesis 2:7 says that when God created man, He formed man's body of the dust of the ground and breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. The Hebrew word for breath in Genesis 2:7 is the same word for spirit in Proverbs 20:27, which refers to the "spirit of man." This proves that the breath of life breathed into the nostrils of man is the spirit within man. God breathed into man the breath of life because man needs a spirit in order to contain God.

Our Openness and Emptiness

We need to be vessels open to the Lord, continually receiving the divine dispensing for God's expression and representation (13:14). This realization will change your Christian life. The Lord only wants you to love Him and be open to Him. Once you do these, He will do everything else. Just love Him. In your heart, tell Him, "Lord, I love You. I love You very much, and I present myself to You as an open vessel. Lord, I would like to give You every opportunity to do everything You want to do in me. I need to be emptied out of any feelings that I have been harboring for many years. I am willing to be emptied. The only thing I know is that I love You and that I am open to You." This kind of opening to the Lord is precious to the Lord beyond description. Of the six billion people on the earth, very few love Him, and of those who love Him, very few are willing to be absolutely open to Him. We are not as open as we may think; however, we can make a decision. Even right now we can pray, "Lord, this moment I choose for the rest of my life and for eternity to become an absolutely open vessel. I love You. I have never loved You more than I love You right now. Lord, I am opening to You. I open my heart, my mind, my whole emotion, my will, and my spirit. I open every part of my being, and I ask for one thing--Your dispensing. All I ask for and all I need is for You to be wrought into me, dispensed into me, and worked into me. Make me a vessel through Your dispensing. Lord, I believe that if You can get into me, You can do anything--You can sanctify, renew, transform, conform, and glorify me. Your life is the overcoming life. Your life is indestructible. It is a saving and reigning life. Here I am, an open vessel." Corporately, we can pray, "Lord, fill our whole being! Dispense Yourself into us. Make us men of life. May we grow in life, mature in life, reign in life, and bless the earth with life. Thank You, Lord. Amen!"

If we give the Lord free access to our entire vessel, something will happen in the matter of life: we will be emptied and filled. We will touch the key. The central thought of the Bible is open vessels. We are vessels, God is the dispensing God, and God wants to fill us with Himself as life so that we can express Him, represent Him, and eventually become His reproduction. This will happen little by little and day by day.

* Ministry portions from *Ministry Magazine* and *Life-Study of Genesis*.