

You Are Special
From the Series, “Life Answers in Genesis”
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Introduction



There's a story about a man who lived back in the days when people either travelled on foot, or by horse. The man's name was William. Sadly, William woke up one morning and found that his faithful steed had died.

Now, this horse wasn't just any horse – he was special. So, William didn't want just any horse to replace it. He wanted another special horse. So, he asked around and ran into someone who claimed that he had such a horse.

The man who was in possession of the horse said, “This horse used to belong to a minister. The minister named him ‘Luke’ after the book in the Bible. When the minister started speaking, he always hoped his congregation would say, ‘Praise the Lord’. When he stopped, he hoped the congregation would say, ‘Amen’. So, he trained his horse along those lines. Whenever the rider says, ‘Praise the Lord’, Luke starts to walk. Repeating the phrase ‘Praise the Lord’ makes him go faster. The minister then trained Luke to stop when the rider said, ‘amen’.”

William got on the horse and tried this, and sure enough, the horse behaved exactly as described. So, William bought the horse and started off. He said, “Praise the Lord”, and Luke started to walk. He said, “Praise the Lord” again, and Luke broke into a trot. And so, this went on for a while.

Luke was a very smooth horse, so William fell asleep. He woke up just in time to see something terrifying - Luke was galloping straight towards a cliff. And worse, William forgot what he was supposed to say!

Just as they got to the edge, William remembered - He called out, "Amen". Luke slid to a halt in the nick of time. A few little pebbles rolled over the cliff. William sat there, catching his breath. He was overjoyed that he remembered the right word just in time to save his life.

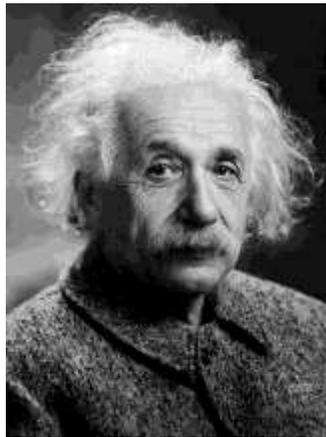
So, he said out loud, "Praise the Lord".

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We're in our series, "Life Answers in Genesis". Life is full of questions, and it's amazing how many answers you can find by just opening the Bible at the beginning.

Here's another important question that people think about: ***Am I Special?***

Well, the answer is "yes", and "no". You see, it depends on whom you ask. If you ask someone who thinks that intelligence is special, and you're Albert Einstein, then the answer is "yes", you're special. But, if you're not Albert Einstein, or someone in his class, you're not special.



If you ask someone who looks for beauty, and you're a glamour model, then yes, you're special. If you're average looking then no, you're not special.

This list goes on. Are you special? It depends on whom you ask.

How about this - What would happen if you were to ask God what he thought about you? Does he think you're special? The answer is a resounding, "Yes"! Let's find out why you're special. We'll start by asking, "What does 'special' mean?"

I. What does 'special' mean?

To be 'special' mean to be 'unique in a good way'. Other good words for unique are 'uncommon' and 'distinct'.

Here's something interesting: If you say to most people, 'you're special', that makes them happy. Conversely, one of the biggest put-downs you can say about someone is to say that there's nothing special about them. This leads to a second question: **Why would someone want to be special?** Why does it make us happy to hear that we're special? Why does it make us unhappy to hear otherwise?

Because to be **special** means to be **valuable**.



You're looking at the Hope Diamond. Since 1958, it's been on display at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. According to some sources, this gem is worth 250 million dollars.

Why is it worth so much? Because it's special. It's a blue diamond. This makes the stone uncommon; blue diamonds occur less in nature than diamonds of other colors. And it's a very deep shade of blue. It's also one of the largest blue diamonds in the world. Add to all of that, it's one of the oldest gems of its kind, having been around since the 1600s. Because it has many qualities that make it uncommon and distinct from other gems, it's very valuable.

So, when something is special, it's valuable. The more special it is, the more value. Why do people like to be special? *Because, we all want to be valuable.*

Now, why do we all like to be valuable? The desire to be valuable is common to all people. Even more than a desire; some would say a longing. All human beings long to be valuable. All human beings long to be special. Why is that?

That's because of our next point.

II. God created humans to be special.

God created us to be special. Deep in our hearts, we know it. It doesn't always feel that way though, so sometimes we need help to make it real. We've said that you can answer many questions in life by opening the book of Genesis, so let's do it once again.

We learn in the first verse of Genesis that God is our creator.

In the beginning, God created... (Genesis 1:1)

Now, he created lots of things.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good... (Genesis 1:3-4)

So, God makes light. He says the light is good. Note: That's God's perspective - Mine is different.



You're looking at the Carina Nebula. This image was taken by the Hubble telescope. I think it's beautiful. It's one of many such beautiful things in our galaxy.

Everyone likes light shows. Fireworks are a great example. Being a resident of the United States, I look forward every year to seeing Fourth of July Fireworks. When I see the dazzling lights of a major fireworks display, I say, "That's beautiful". But I look at an image like the one above and I say, "That's fantastic!"

God looks at this image and says, "good". Let's read on to see some other things that God created.

And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:9-10)

I love the ocean. There’s something about being near water that’s wonderful for the soul. Here’s an image of a wave crashing onto a tropical beach in the sunlight:



I look at this and I say, “beautiful - magnificent”. God looks at this, and he says, “good”.

What else did God make?

The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:12)

Do you like flowers? I love flowers. My idea of a good day is visiting a botanical garden. Here’s an image of a peaceful meadow with flowers:



I could get a chair, sit in this meadow and gaze at it for hours. I look at this meadow and I say, “Beautiful!”. God says, “good”.

God still has more he wants to do:

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:25)

Who doesn’t like going to the zoo? Beautiful pictures of animals are all over the Internet. I picked just one from a long list:



You’re looking at a golden-variegated tree frog. It’s tiny. Yet, our most complex machines don’t begin to compare with this tiny little creature. God has made countless such animals. They range from tiny to massive. I look at something like this, and I say “amazing”. I look at the number of them, and I think “beyond belief”. God says, “good”.

Then, God brought about one more creative act:

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and

all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”
(Genesis 1:26)

What does God say about this final act?

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

Prior to this, God made a universe. He created lights in the skies. He created our planet and put all kinds of things on it: Animals and birds and fish and plants. We look at all those things and we say words like wonderful, beautiful, and amazing. God says, “good”. But then, God makes human beings. Only then does he say, “very good”.

We are not like any other thing in all of God’s creation. We’ve discussed this earlier in our series, so I’ll just mention it here. We’re the only creatures made in God’s image. We alone have that quality. We’ve discussed why that is important in other talks, and we’ll discuss it more in the future. For now, let’s simply say that there is something about humans that is special – very special.

That’s because God made humans to be special. We aren’t like anything else. We’re unique. We’re distinct. That makes us valuable. ***That make you valuable.***

It’s not just that God made us to be special. He didn’t create us and then walk away.

II. God acts like humans are special.

God acts like we’re special. How does he do that?

First, he supplies our needs. Here are more words from the book of Genesis:

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. (Genesis 8:22)

As we’ve discussed in other sessions, there are some who choose to disobey God. God still gives good things to them, because they’re special, too.

...He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:45)

God acts like humans are special, no matter how they behave.

Some choose to follow God. ***Those people become even more special.*** They’re even more unique, and more valuable.

You've all heard the phrase, "apple of my eye", right? You've heard it in songs: Steve Wonder sang, "You are the apple of my eye." We hear that phrase a lot about romantic love. But, is that what it means? The phrase is used differently in the Bible. Let's look at the book of Deuteronomy, where God talks about his dealings with Israel:

He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye
(Deuteronomy 32:10)

Now, apples are nice. We all like a nice, juicy apple. They had apples back in Bible days in the middle east. Let's ask some questions though: What would you do to guard an apple? How much would you give to guard a piece of fruit; even a very, very nice piece of fruit?

When the Bible refers to the apple of someone's eye, it's not referring to a piece of fruit.

The apple of the eye refers to the pupil of the eye.



Now, the pupil of an eye – That's something you would protect! Your eyes are special, and very valuable. You only get one set. You rely on them heavily. If they are damaged; if you lose them, it's tragic.

Your body is designed to protect your eye. You have an eyebrow. When water drips down, the eyebrow whisks it away. If you see something coming towards your eyes, you have a response programmed into your nervous system. Your whole body begins to turn away. Your hands and arms are immediately called into action. You blink.

Your eyes are special, so you protect them. When people choose to follow God through Jesus Christ, he protects them zealously, just like any of us would protect the most important parts of our bodies.

So, God acts like humans are special.

- He provides for them.
- He protects them.

- He does those things even more when people choose to follow him.

Those are two important words: Protect and provide. We'll talk more about those in a later message in our series. But, let's get back to our main line of thought.

At this point, some might say, "This is great". God made humans to be special. God acts like humans are special. But, there are 7 billion people on the earth. **Am I special?** How can I be unique and different when there are 7 billion humans?

Here's good news:

III. God created **YOU** to be special.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139: 14)

Now, notice that the writer doesn't say, "Humans are fearfully and wonderfully made." He says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made..." This is personal. He says something more:

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:15-16)

What is the writer saying here? He's saying that he is special, because God created him to be special. God created him to be special in his mother's womb. When this man was just a design, before his was even conceived, God was at work in his life. This man believed that God had a plan for him. It's as though God has a book, and all the plans are written down in advance.

Is this writer saying this just to talk to himself? Of course not! He's saying this for our benefit.

Friends, you are special. You were special before you were born. God had a plan for you then, and God has a plan for you now. Your life has meaning and purpose. Special meaning. Special purpose.

There's only one final question: ***Do you want to participate in the plan that God has for you?***

Maybe you're thinking, "well, why would anyone NOT want to participate in the plan that God has for them?" That's a good question. Let's find out why.

Our Problem

We have a problem. God tells us we're special. But, there are other voices. Voices that tell us otherwise. Sometimes we listen to them instead of God.

Last week, we learned about our adversary, known as the Devil and Satan. He works against us. He lies to us. He lies a lot. We don't have time to go into why. We talked a bit about it last week, we'll talk more in coming days. For now, just know that the Devil lies to us – a lot.

We also don't have time to go into all the lies that the Devil tells. Today, we'll just talk about a few. We'll concentrate on the lies that fall into this category: "You're **not** special".

How does the Devil try to convince us that we're not special? Well, first, he uses science. Let me say, he uses "bad" science.

Here's a quote from the famous astrophysicist, Steven Hawking:

"We are such insignificant creatures on a minor planet of a very average star in the outer suburbs of one of a hundred thousand million galaxies. So it is difficult to believe in a God that would care about us or even notice our existence. (Edwards, 2001 p 211)"

This is a sad tribute to what happens when people choose to rebel against God. Earlier, we looked at an image of a beautiful nebula out in space. People who follow God look at such an image, and it makes us want to worship God. Stephen Hawking looks at the same image, and sees reasons to think that humans are nothing special.

This lie is especially prevalent in our educational system. Our young people will be told in school that human life is nothing more than the product of a random universe. That's why it's so important to train our young people to be ready for such lies.

There are lots of scientists who believe in God. One was Albert Einstein. He was not a Christian, but he believed in a creator of the universe. He was once asked to respond to someone who believed the universe is run by chance. He simply said, "God does not play dice".

So, the Devil tries to tell us that science says we're not special. But, that's a perversion of science. There are lots of great scientists who say otherwise.

Next, he tries to tell us that we're only special if we meet worldly standards of beauty and talent and intelligence. Here's a picture from a standard fashion show.



Only the most beautiful women get to walk down the runway. The Devil says, “If you don’t fit into this, you don’t matter.”

Well, fortunately, what the Devil says doesn’t matter. As we learned in our last session, he’s last. God is first. The only thing that matters is what God thinks about you. As we’ve been saying through our series, God cherishes you. He knows what you look like. He knows exactly what gifts you have; intelligence, talent, whatever. The way he created you is part of his plan for you.

I should mention, there’s nothing wrong with possessing talent or intelligence or even beauty. They’re all things that can be used by God when people choose to follow him. But if you recall from last week, beauty is what tempted the Devil to rebel. And talent, intelligence, and beauty are often stumbling blocks for otherwise good people.

One more quick note: We’ve said that you’re special to God. From there, we need to understand that others are special, too. God values *all* human life.



That’s why many Christians get concerned about topics like abortion. Some would look at the image here and say that it doesn’t matter. There’s nothing “special” about a baby in the womb. It doesn’t have talent, or beauty, or intelligence that we can see. And, there are lots of them. What’s one more or less? So, many believe that this child can simply be destroyed at will. That’s tragic, because all human life is special to God.

Conclusion

So, one more question that people raise today is, “Am I Special”. The Bible gives us a resounding, “yes”! We all want to be special, because being special means being valuable.

We’ve learned today that God created humans to be special.

- Humans are unlike anything else in the creation.
- We alone have God’s image.

We’ve learned that God acts like humans are special.

- He provides for them and protects them.

We’ve also learned that our adversary, the Devil tells us lots of lies.

- Among those lies, he tries to convince us that what God says about us isn’t true.
- He uses science.
- He uses worldly standards.

In the end, we must learn to avoid listening to his words.

There’s a wonderful song that many of us learned as children. It teaches us all these things.

Jesus loves me -this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.

Whether a child in the womb or a fully-grown adult, humans are special to God.

You are special to God.

May God grant us the ability to understand this truth.

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