

First Things
Genesis 2:7
"The Dirt in Our Past"

1. THE METHOD OF MAN'S ORIGIN POINTS US TO OUR FATHER
 - A. The glory of His labor
 - B. The gift of His life
2. THE MATERIAL OF MAN'S ORIGIN POINTS US TO OUR FRAILTY
 - A. The accuracy of this
 - B. The application of this
3. THE MESSAGE OF MAN'S ORIGIN POINTS US TO OUR FAITH
 - A. The seriousness of creation
 - B. The supremacy of Christ

1. In the sport of horse racing, it has long been required that before a horse is allowed to enter a race, it has to be thoroughly examined by a veterinarian. This process became known as "vetting".

2. Today, the term "vetting" has crossed over from horses to humans, and is now used to describe the process of investigating and checking someone's background.

3. You hear the term a lot around the time of the presidential election, and especially when a candidate must choose a vice-presidential running mate.

4. Each candidate will be thoroughly "vetted" to insure there are no serious scandals or problems in their past. Politicians know that a little dirt in the past can become a big stain in the present.

5. The reality is that every one of us has some dirt in our past – *literally*. Genesis 2:7 elaborates a little further on the creation of man, and adds to what we have already been told in chapter one about the origin of man.

6. Genesis 2:7 says, "*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*"

7. This straightforward and simple verse opens up some important truths about God's work in giving life to the human race.

8. On November 24, 1859, Charles Darwin published his infamous and powerful book called, *On the Origin of the Species*.

9. Darwin's theories of natural selection and evolution are now looked upon by most scientists as fact. His book almost single-handedly changed the way men think about their origins.

10. When we look in the Word of God, we find a story of man's beginnings that is not only contradictory to Darwin's theories, but also leads to very different conclusions and beliefs about the meaning of man's existence.

11. The Holy Spirit's account of man's origin lifts our gaze above the guesses of so-called scientists, and points us solely to our Creator as the source of life, and the meaning of it as well.

12. Notice with me what we see as we study this account of our origin. First of all, looking at this text, we see that:

I. THE METHOD OF MAN'S ORIGIN POINTS US TO OUR FATHER

1. There is an important change that takes place when you move into Genesis chapter two. Beginning in verse 4, the writer adds to the name he uses for God.

2. Throughout chapter one, and into the first three verses of two, God is referred to by the name *Elohim*, which is translated simply as "God".

3. However, at the close of verse 4, we read that, "...*the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*"

4, Note the name "Lord" that is placed alongside the title, "God". The word translated "Lord" is Jehovah. It is the personal, and covenant name of God.

5. With this additional name, we are reminded that the God of creation is not some impersonal, mysterious deity. He is in fact the Lord God Jehovah; the very God we call our Father.

6. When we look at the method Jehovah used to create man, according to this text, we are reminded of some things about God, our Heavenly Father.

7. For one thing, we are reminded of:

A. The glory of His labor

1. Verse 7 puts it sort of "matter-of-factly" when it says, "*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground...*"

2. Notice that word "formed". It is translated from a Hebrew word that is used to describe the work of a potter. The word literally means to shape.

3. The Holy Spirit paints a picture for us of our Heavenly Father kneeling down into the primeval clay of the newly the created earth, and with His own hands fashioning and shaping the first human body.
4. Think of that! It is a remarkable statement! This is the God who with nothing but His spoken word, created the peaks of the Rockies and the depths of the Atlantic.
5. This is the God who called light out of darkness, time out of eternity, space out of emptiness, and matter out of nothingness.
6. Yet, here we find him taking His own hands, and weaving the intricate blood vessels of the human heart, crafting the meticulous layers of the human eye, and forming the tiny ridges of Adam's fingerprints with His own divine fingers.
7. Psalm 139:14 says, "*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...*" Don't let the economy of words fool you. Those five words, "the Lord God formed man", describe a marvelous and awesome work.
8. We are pointed to our Father, and to the glory of His labor. We are also pointed here to the Father, and:

B. The gift of His life

1. Verse 2 not only says that God formed man, but it goes on to say that He, "*...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...*"
2. This is a remarkably intimate picture. The word "breathed" describes a face-to-face act; something that would require contact.
3. It is akin to our "mouth-to-mouth" resuscitation, only this is "suscitation", if you will. God blew His own breath into the lifeless body of man.
4. This is the giving of life from the infinite God to the finite man. It is man moving from a mere lump of clay to an animated, energized, living being.
5. We are told in other Scriptures that *all* living creatures contain this "breath of life", but only in the case of man do we find God personally and directly depositing it into the body.
6. Consequently, this is why we place such an emphasis on the sanctity of human life. That breath in your chest is the breath of God.
7. No man has the right to remove that breath apart from the One who placed it there! He is the giver and sustainer of life, and to Him belong this issues of death.

8. When we look at the intimate and incomparable method that God used when He formed us and filled us with His life, we are reminded of our Father, and His love for us.

9. Looking at this text, we are pointed to a further truth. If *the method of man's origin points us to our Father*, then I we see also that:

II. THE MATERIAL OF MAN'S ORIGIN POINTS US TO OUR FRAILITY

1. Look again at verse 7. It says, "*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground...*" We are told that God used the materials at hand when He began to shape and form the body of man.

2. What was the material at hand? The Bible calls it "the dust of the ground".

3. Man is a marvelous wonder of God's power, yet the glory belongs not to man to the creature, but to God the Creator who formed Him out of nothing but dust.

4. One of my favorite verses is Psalm 103:14 where it says, "*For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*" God has not forgotten what we are made of, and it would do us some good to remember as well.

5. Consider what the Word of God says here about the materials used in our formation. Consider first of all:

A. The accuracy of this

1. It might seem fantastic and mythological to look at the human body, with its flesh, blood, and bones, and connect it back to the dust of the ground.

2. However, it is not all that far-fetched. The word translated "dust" in our text, conveys the thought of the smallest and tiniest particles that make up the earth.

3. Dr. Henry Morris, in his wonderful book on Genesis, explains it as, "...the basic chemical elements: nitrogen, oxygen, calcium, etc...were also the basic physical elements of the human body."ⁱ

4. Someone has calculated that a 150 lb. man is essentially made up of:

- 92.4 lbs. of oxygen
- 31.5 lbs. of carbon
- 14.6 lbs. of hydrogen
- 4.6 lbs of nitrogen
- 2.8 lbs. phosphorous

1.12 lbs. chlorine
1.02 lbs. iron
0.34 lbs potassium
0.24 lbs. sulphur
0.12 lbs sodium
0.04 lbs magnesium
0.02 lbs. flourineⁱⁱ

5. Though some would scoff at what we read in Genesis 2:7, the reality is that though a man may be physically different from the ground he walks on, he is not elementally different.

6. When we read about the materials used in man's creation, we recognize not only the accuracy of this, but consider also with me:

B. The application of this

1. There is a greater truth conveyed in this text than just the facts of the physical makeup of mankind.

2. I love what John Calvin says about this passage. He writes, "...the body of Adam is formed of clay, and destitute of sense; to the end that no one should exult beyond measure in his flesh. He must be excessively stupid who does not hence learn humility."ⁱⁱⁱ

3. Sainly Matthew Henry puts it another way. He says, "He was not made of gold-dust, powder of pearl, or diamond dust, but common dust, the dust of the ground."

4. The application we must take away from our dirty origins is that we have no reason to be proud of our flesh, or to glory in ourselves and what we are.

5. A man may exercise and train, chiseling his body into a mass of muscle. He then may dress that body in the finest clothes, and cover it with the most expensive colognes.

6. Yet, in spite of all the outward adornments, that man is still just dust. When he dies, his body will return to the dust from whence it came.

7. In Romans 7:18, the Apostle Paul spiritualizes this truth, and says, "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing...*"

8. We can't put too much confidence in our earthly, dusty bodies. The Psalmist is right when he says, "*It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.*" (Psalm 118:8)

9. Apart from God, we are but frail creatures. Our bodies are a wonderful creation of God, but they are also a humble product of the earth.

10. There is a third truth we are pointed to in this text. We see not only that *the method of man's origin points us to our Father*, and *the material of man's origin points us to our frailty*, but we see also lastly that:

III. THE MESSAGE OF MAN'S ORIGIN POINTS US TO OUR FAITH

1. What we have in Genesis 2:7 is more than just a record of what God did in the creation of man.
2. Believing that what the Word of God asserts in this passage is true, it serves as the foundation for everything else the Bible is going to teach.
3. What we believe about our God, the Lord Jesus, and the gospel that saves us is all connected to what is revealed in this text.
4. Think with me about how this single verse points us to our faith as a whole. For one thing, this verse reminds us of:

A. The seriousness of creation

1. Genesis 2:7 says that after God formed man from the dust of the ground, and blew His own breath into him, then we read that, "...*man became a living soul.*"
2. The idea is that man became a conscious, active, functioning being after God created him and gave him life.
3. Opposite of this teaching is the prevailing theory of evolution that assumes that man has evolved from lower, unconscious forms of life.
4. We all need to understand that the conflict and debate between creationism and evolution is not just an argument for a handful Christian geeks and the secular scientists.
5. Creation is serious – eternally serious. If evolution is true, then man has no accountability to God, and no higher purpose for his existence.
6. If, as the Word of God says, man was in fact created by the hand of God and given life by the breath of God, then all men are accountable to Jehovah God as their maker, and they are responsible to carry out His commands for their life.

7. I remind you again that what the Bible says about the beginning of life is just as true and just as important as what it says about the end of life.

8. If we give up Eden and the creation of man, we must also give up Heaven and the salvation of man. If God is not our Creator, we have no reason to believe He will be our Savior.

9. The message of Genesis 2:7 points us to the seriousness of creation. I would add that it also points us to:

B. The supremacy of Christ

1. As we have seen in our study of Genesis so far, the New Testament has much to say about these opening chapters of the Bible.

2. It seems there is a New Testament commentary on nearly every truth asserted at the beginning of the Old Testament.

3. That is true of this text in Genesis 2. In I Corinthians 15, Paul compares and contrasts Adam with Jesus Christ.

4. In verse 45 of that chapter, we read, *"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."*

5. Paul goes on to explain what that means in verses 47-49. There it says:

"The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

6. The idea is that while Adam came from this earth, Jesus comes from heaven to the earth.

7. Those who are born into Adam's race are born with his earthly image upon them. Those who are born again into the family of God are born with a heavenly image.

8. In verse 50, Paul says, *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

9. When we look at Adam, formed by the hand of God out of the dust of the ground, we are reminded that as wonderful as Adam's creation was, it is nothing compared to the new creation that takes place when a man comes to faith in Jesus Christ.

10. Adam was made and prepared for this earth, but Jesus comes to make us ready for another world, and the new earth that is to come.

11. See the Lord Jesus taking on the flesh of man, and dying on the cross for the sins of man! Look to Him who became like us that we might become like Him!

12. We marvel at the creation of Adam, but we worship the One who was greater than Adam! We are mindful of the superiority and supremacy of Christ.

1. Through the years my dad has invested a great amount of time in tracing the genealogy of our family.

2. You won't be surprised to learn that there is nothing noble or special about the Trivette family bloodline.

3. The truth is, if you trace all families back far enough, we all come from the same dirt pile.

4. What makes man significant is not the elements that makeup his life and body. No, what is significant is the God who formed his body and breathed His own life into it.

5. It is the same God who would one day come and walk among His own creatures so that He might suffer in their place, at their hands, and for their sins.

6. We are just dust, but we have a Savior who will take the dust of our mortal bodies, fill it with His own Spirit, and transform it into something eternal and incorruptible.

ⁱ Morris, Henry M., The Genesis Record, (Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, CA, 1976), p. 85

ⁱⁱ Humankind, *sermonillustrations.com*, accessed 10/2/10, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/h/humankind.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Calvin, John, John Calvin's Bible Commentary: Genesis, *ewordtoday.com*, accessed 10/2/10, <http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/genesis/calvin/genesis2.htm>