



READ: Genesis 1:26-31; 2:7 (NIV)

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." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." 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. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

ENTER THE STORY:

Every great story has a beginning that grabs your attention and stirs up your excitement for what is to come! The Christmas story has a beginning like that, and it starts *right here in Genesis*. Out of the dark, empty nothingness God brought everything into existence by the commanding word of his mouth. For six days, he filled the world with everything it needed to grow and thrive and display his glory, but he was not done. It's almost like he saved the best for last because when God created man, he didn't speak him into existence... he knelt down and formed him from the dust of the earth, crafting him together with a personal touch. But this dirt-man was not yet alive. In order for that to happen, God needed to breathe into him the breath of life. In the same way that God promised to bring life from a dead stump, in Genesis, he brought life from dust.

The truth is when God created humans, he had another human in mind... his Son, Jesus. For though Jesus exists as the eternal God, the alpha and the omega, the Christmas story will require him to leave his glorious position in heaven and come to earth to be the perfect human. He will not be merely be made "in the image of God" like us though, because he IS the image of God. *Colossians 1:15* says, "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." Our beginning was always meant to point forward to his earthly beginning when Jesus, the very Word of God, is made into flesh and dwells among us (John 1:1,14).

When that fullness of time comes, we will again see God bring light out of darkness as he commands a star to shine so bright in the sky that the nations will know "The Light of the World" has arrived.

PRAY: Jesus, we are grateful that you are the image of the invisible God, the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his nature. We are thankful that through the Holy Spirit, we can be united to you. We pray that you would shape us to look more and more like you each day. Amen.